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## RELIGIOUS FAITH

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RELIGIOUS FAITH

*AN ESSAY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF  
RELIGION*

BY THE

REV. HENRY HUGHES, M.A.

"

AUTHOR OF "THE THEORY OF INFERENCE," ETC.

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## PREFACE.

THE main purpose of this volume is to exhibit Scriptural Christianity as a true system of religious philosophy. An endeavour is made to provide new and approximately adequate satisfaction for the inquiring religious thought of the present day by means of a philosophical vindication of New Testament theology. Conciliation between the free and full exercise of reason and loyal attachment to the Christian Church is sought on the basis of the entire truth of the moral and spiritual teaching of the Bible.

A second purpose, subsidiary to the first, is to clear away some of the mist which, even in the mind of the Christian Church, envelops the teaching of the New Testament on the subject of faith.

And a third purpose, likewise subsidiary, is to insist on the fact that Christian knowledge and Christian practice, as commonly understood, have no sufficient foundation in unaided human reason, but must be, as the Bible represents them, the product of revelation.

In order to keep the whole discussion within moderate limits, it has not been carried beyond the subjects which cluster more or less immediately around the term 'faith. Faith is confessedly the essential part of the religious consciousness; and a vindication of the Scriptural doctrine of faith is virtually a vindication of the general system of Scriptural theology.

The author has criticized with some severity, it may be



thought, writers with whom he finds himself in disagreement. He claims for his own work no immunity from error; nor will he be altogether sorry to be himself caught tripping. At the same time let him say that he has taken all pains to avoid mistakes. He thinks that it has been given to him, as it has been given to many another, to say one or two things both new and true; and, if his book should be honoured with sufficient study to expose real error, he will have the more hope that his special message has sunk into the minds of those who are not satisfied with his presentation of it.

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BOOK I.

THE MEANING OF FAITH.



# THE MEANING OF FAITH.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED.

I. WHAT, in these days, is the proper attitude of consciousness towards the Existence or the Power whom we hear spoken of as God? How is it reasonable to regard Him, in His nature, in His relation to mankind, in His claims to consideration at their hands? How is it wise to be disposed or affected towards Him?

To this momentous, this much-debated and variously answered question there seems to be room for yet one more reply. There is, apparently, a way of approaching the subject which has scarcely received the attention it deserves. Many, no doubt, have been the endeavours—endeavours meeting with more or less success—to make some partial use of it; but the method, in its entirety, seems to have been too much neglected. The way or method referred to is that of exhibiting the Scriptural scheme of Christian doctrine as the one satisfactory system of religious philosophy.

The problem is, to find a religion which educated reason may accept, and which shall at the same time correspond to man's deepest spiritual needs. Whence, then, shall come the formulation of such a system? Can reason, proceeding step by step from what it naturally knows,

substantiate a conception of the nature and the ways of God such as shall meet all the felt requirements of the religious consciousness? The view that will be taken in this book is that such discovery—purely rational in its method, transcendent in its result—is quite impossible. The solution of the problem cannot, apparently, be obtained without the aid of the hypothesis of God's revelation of Himself to the mind of man. In the contents of some alleged revelation must be found, if anywhere, the explanation of the most exalted phases of the religious life.

There can be little doubt that the Christian consciousness is by far the highest, or most developed, or truest type of religious consciousness existing in the world. And perhaps, too, there can be little doubt that we are entitled to assume—at least provisionally—a general correspondence between the tenets of any religious system and the religious consciousness of its adherents. If, therefore, we look to any system of doctrine, alleged to be revealed, as the possible religion of which we are in search, it is to Christian doctrine first of all that our attention must be turned. Presumably any other system must be unsatisfactory, as falling far short of correspondence to the actual consciousness of Christians. Presumably we have in Christian doctrine the nearest approximation, to be met with under any one name, to a system of religion adapted to meet the requirements of a developed consciousness. And the question before us thus seems to resolve itself into this—Can the doctrine of the Christian Scriptures be accepted by reason as both true and satisfying?

II. The general aim of the present volume is to answer this question affirmatively; to exhibit, that is, Scriptural Christianity as an adequate system of religious philosophy

that may, or even must, reasonably be received as true. It is not, however, intended to treat of all Christian doctrine; it is proposed to deal only with that part of it which clusters more or less immediately around the term "faith." The discussion will thus be brought within moderate compass without prejudice to the argument. There is scarcely need to justify the assumption, here implied, that faith—whatever it may be taken to be in its exact signification—is the essential part of Christian consciousness. Manifestly the Scriptures thus exhibit it; and this general view of it may be said to be, amid all diversities of opinion, universally admitted.

Let the late Professor Jowett—with whom we shall presently have to disagree—here be heard in support of the view that there is need of some new exhibition of Christian doctrine suited to the intellectual needs of the present age. "Time was," he says, "when the Gospel was before the age; when it breathed a new life into a decaying world—when the difficulties of Christianity were difficulties of the heart only, and the highest minds found in its truths not only the rule of their lives, but a well-spring of intellectual delight." "Is it," he continues, "to be held a thing impossible that the Christian religion, instead of shrinking into itself, may again embrace the thoughts of men upon the earth? Or is it true that since the Reformation 'all intellect has gone the other way'? and that in Protestant countries reconciliation is as hopeless as Protestants commonly believe to be the case in Catholic?" And presently he remarks, "No one can form any notion from what we see around us, of the power which Christianity might have if it were at one with the conscience of man, and not at variance with his intellectual convictions. There, a world weary of the heat and dust of controversy—of speculation about God



and man—weary too of the rapidity of its own motion, would return home and find rest.”<sup>1</sup>

III. Before faith and all that hangs upon it can be exhibited as a true system of conceptions, it is, of course, necessary that we should understand exactly what Christianity means initially by faith. And here the difficulty of our task begins. For—as has been already hinted—there are among Christians diversities of opinion as to what is its real nature as a part of consciousness. Before reason can be fairly asked to accept a doctrine of faith purporting to be revealed, conciliation must somehow be effected, or at all events must be attempted, between different views current among Christians of the essential scope of such a doctrine. manifold, indeed, are the states of consciousness to which faith is applied as a common name. Confidence in God, trust in Jesus Christ, clear vision of an expected future, insight into spiritual truth, submission of the intellect to dogma, activity of religious faculty—these scarcely exhaust the list of more or less commonly accepted synonyms. And we find a tendency among theologians and divines to insist each upon his own particular conception, to the virtual exclusion, it may be, of the rest. Accordingly as the experience of the individual thinker leads him to look upon this or that as the most vital element in the religious consciousness, is he disposed to magnify it, and to claim for it that it is the objective basis of all religious lives. And, in general, each advocate has some ground for pointing to Scripture for confirmation of his view. For unquestionably the term faith is used in the New Testament to cover divers significations.

Let us, too, here appeal to Scripture. In the absence of agreement among exponents of Christian doctrine it is

<sup>1</sup> Essay on the interpretation of Scripture.

reasonable—having it in our power to do so—to refer to the mind of the Church's founders. The writers who in a manner are entitled to be regarded as the originators, not only of the name, but also of the conception of Christian faith, may best be consulted at first hand, when among their interpreters there is wide divergence of opinion. And though, as has just been said, we shall certainly find in the Scripture itself the term faith variously employed, yet difference here may be expected to admit of a reconciling treatment of which, in the case of difference among modern theologians, there is no equal likelihood.

For, assuming that the New Testament is in substance—what it professes to be—a revelation of spiritual truth, we are surely justified in making the further provisional assumption, that the several writers, each announcing some fragment of a true theology, put forth no statement which is not capable of being harmonized with all the rest. If in one book we have one account of faith, and in another book or another part of the same book we have another, it is wholly reasonable to assume provisionally that the two accounts, instead of being discordant, do but set forth different parts or aspects of one and the same whole. And it seems to be our proper business, in the inquiry that lies before us, to gather together all diverse sayings concerning faith, and see if there is not thus produced one compound presentation of religious consciousness in all respects consistent with itself. Conceivably our provisional assumption may in the end prove to be unwarranted. Conceivably we may meet with contradictions incapable of being reconciled. Then, but not before, we must admit that the Church has had delivered to it no authoritative description of that which is most essential in Christian consciousness.

Let us, then, not shrink from a full recognition of diversities of statement concerning faith. Let us not hasten to evade the difficulty which they present by derogating from the authority of the writers, or by means of any devices of lax interpretation. If by possibility any writer is speaking with insufficient knowledge of his subject, and makes an incorrect application of the term faith, or if he does not intend his words to be understood in any exact and scientific sense, let this be our verdict after, not before, we have taken all pains to construct a harmonious system. When we have failed to harmonize the statements of the different authors, or when, having harmonized them with one another, we cannot go on to reconcile them with facts of human life and character, then it will be time to question the doctrinal accuracy and authority of the New Testament Scriptures.

But the late Professor Jowett—a representative perhaps, though not an extreme one, of the negative or destructive school of criticism—apparently takes another view of the attitude in which it is fitting to approach the study of the Gospels and Epistles. In the same essay, from which a quotation has been already made, he writes as follows:—“There is no appearance in their writings that the Evangelists or Apostles had any inward gift, or were subject to any power external to them different from that of preaching or teaching which they daily exercised; nor do they anywhere lead us to suppose that they were free from error or infirmity. St. Paul writes like a Christian teacher, exhibiting all the emotions and vicissitudes of human feeling, speaking, indeed, with authority, but hesitating in difficult cases, and more than once correcting himself, corrected, too, by the course of events in his expectation of the coming of Christ.” “To attribute to St. Paul or the Twelve the abstract notion of Christian

truth, which afterwards sprang up in the Catholic Church, is the same sort of anachronism as to attribute to them a system of philosophy. It is the same error as to attribute to Homer the ideas of Thales or Heraclitus, or to Thales the more developed principles of Aristotle and Plato." "In some cases, we have only to enlarge the meaning of Scripture to apply it even to the novelties and peculiarities of our own time. . . . When, for example, our Saviour says, 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,' it is not likely that these words would have conveyed to the minds of the Jews who heard Him any notion of the perplexities of doubt or inquiry. Yet we cannot suppose that our Saviour, were He to come again upon earth, would refuse thus to extend them. The Apostle St. Paul, when describing the Gospel, which is to the Greek foolishness, speaks also of a higher wisdom which is known to those who are perfect. Neither is it unfair for us to apply this passage to that reconciliation of faith and knowledge, which may be termed Christian philosophy, as the nearest equivalent to its language in our own day."

Without quite saying it, the first of these passages certainly seems to imply, that St. Paul makes no pretension to being an original herald of revealed truth, that, in so far as he is not repeating to the world lessons already taught by Christ, he claims for his utterances no authority other than such as may belong to them as words of merely human wisdom. But it must be very seriously questioned whether this surprising position of Jowett's is at all capable of being sustained. The second passage apparently takes it for granted, that the mental standpoint of St. Paul, in relation to Christian doctrine, was distinctly below that of the after doctors of the Church. But why, let it be asked, is it necessarily anachronistic to credit him with as perfect

a knowledge of Christian truth as that attained to by his successors in the ministry? Why should we arbitrarily assume that he was not in possession of a revelation, his disclosure of which it took some centuries for the Church fully to understand? And, with regard to the third passage, why, when St. Paul speaks of "a higher wisdom," are we forbidden to suppose that he has in mind precisely the same idea as that which the expression "Christian philosophy" conveys to ourselves? Why may we not affirm that he speaks of himself as a Christian philosopher, without its being objected that this is to attach an "enlarged meaning," and not their plain signification, to his words?

The general situation, be it observed, is this:—If we are willing to entertain the idea of a Divine revelation made to the authors of the New Testament, it is perfectly reasonable to look to their writings for the true philosophy of religion; if, however, we decline to entertain it, then we certainly have little or no ground for expecting to find in them a satisfaction for the present needs of philosophic thought. And according to the view we take of this question of revelation is likely to be our experimental method of interpreting the Scriptures. In the one case we shall be disposed to think that a doctrinal utterance proceeds from ample knowledge and deliberate expression, and we shall regard it as incumbent on us to do no less than weigh it well and search for a place for it in a system of philosophy. In the other case, apparently, our concern will often be to minimize its value or explain it loosely, in consequence of its lying, in any literal signification, beyond the sure and independent grasp of natural reason.

We are about, in this inquiry, to proceed after the former of these two methods. Our immediate business is, by means of thorough examination and strict interpretation, to collect into one whole all the different views of faith pre-

sented in the New Testament. Not, however, in the case of every passage in which faith is mentioned will an interpretation of it be submitted to the reader, since this would be a work of unnecessary magnitude ; but a selection of passages will be put before him, which is intended to be typically exhaustive. That is to say, no passage will be wittingly passed over which would throw new light upon the investigation.

Our Lord's use of the term "faith"—let it be explained—will, for the sake of convenience, be taken in every case as the use of it by the particular Evangelist who reports His utterance.

## CHAPTER II.

### ST. MATTHEW AND ST. MARK.

I. IN St. Matthew's Gospel the first passage to attract our notice is that in which our Lord is reported as commending the faith of the centurion who begged Him to heal his servant. "Jesus marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (viii. 10). What, then, was the nature of the faith which in this centurion was so conspicuous? The answer to this question seems to be contained in some words which he had addressed to Jesus: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." Apparently the greatness of his faith lay in the fact of his recognizing in Jesus very lofty gifts of superhuman dignity and power; his recognition of these gifts being marked by the utmost confidence, and at the same time being based in comparatively slight degree upon evidence of sense. He had, it would seem, in no small measure a keen and subtle insight into the Divine grandeur of the character of Jesus, and so acknowledged in Him a power over nature and a claim to reverence befitting one who was manifestly a chosen messenger of God. How it came to pass that he, more than other men, should have this insight we are not here told, nor need we now stop to inquire; we may content ourselves with noting that it was, according to the narrative, his keenness of intuition that constituted the greatness of his faith. Whence we

may gather, that faith is here regarded as apprehension of the superhuman or Divine nature of Jesus Christ in a degree transcending that which would be justified by any evidence of sense.

The faith of the Canaanitish woman who begged for the healing of her daughter is also spoken of as great. "Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt" (xv. 28). In this case greatness of faith seems to have been manifested by her persistent confidence, in the face of some evidence to the contrary, in the overflowing kindness of Jesus. "Even the dogs," she urges, "eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." She had a firm conviction, to which in spite of rebuffs she clung, that he whom she recognized as the Son of David, and as a person worthy of reverential homage, had in him a strength of love which could not fail in the end to respond to her entreaties. Her conviction was based on no sufficient evidence of sense, but had its justification in a true insight into the character of Jesus as one who was empowered to work the works of a loving God. Again, then, we gather that faith is a true apprehension of the nature of Jesus Christ not wholly based upon such evidence as sense affords.

It is not necessary to touch upon the other passages in which faith is mentioned in connection with an act of healing; for what has been already said seems to cover all that need be said in reference to them. We pass on to the consideration of a passage in which the disciples are reproached by our Lord for the smallness of their faith, a passage in which faith is again exhibited, though in a somewhat different manner, as insight into His superhuman or Divine nature. We have seen how faith apprehends His majesty and power, and we have seen how it



apprehends His love ; and we are here further shown how it apprehends the spiritual thought and purpose of His ministry. "The disciples came to the other side and forgot to take bread. And Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, We took no bread. And Jesus perceiving it said, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread? Do ye not yet perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not perceive that I spake not to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (xvi. 5—12). Only a short time previously Jesus had been engaged in a painful interview with some of the Pharisees and Sadducees, on which interview, and on His general work and spiritual teaching, they might, had they been possessed of more sympathetic insight, have judged that His thoughts were now dwelling, rather than on their omission to provide bread ; more especially as this was an omission which they might know it was fully within His power to supply in case of need. But they, being chiefly concerned about things of sense, and having little perception of the spiritual thought of Jesus, attach a carnal signification to the word leaven, and so are reproached by Him for the smallness of their faith.

We may notice next a passage in which want of faith is spoken of as a bar to the performance of Christ's miracles : "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (xiii. 58). The inhabitants of Nazareth.

we are told, who had known him for many years living humbly and quietly among them, could not understand His possession of the wisdom and the power which He now displayed. Experience and the evidence of sense taught them that the son of a village carpenter, who had grown up to manhood under their own eyes, was not a person in whom special powers and abilities were likely to be found, entitling him to honour and regard. Leaving, therefore, the question of the reality and source of His wondrous performances unsolved, they held to their opinion that Jesus was what they had always supposed Him to be—one of themselves, an ordinary man. They altogether failed to see in His words and in His works indications of a nature transcending that of common humanity; they were deficient in spiritual insight. They were puzzled, no doubt, by His career, but their estimate of His Person was not raised. Want of faith thus denoting a clinging to the bare evidence of sense experience, in relation to the Person of Jesus Christ, instead of recognizing the truth and significance of phenomena which seem inconsistent with it, faith may be, as before, said to be an apprehension of the nature of Jesus not entirely founded upon sense considerations.

II. We come now to a different conception of faith. The disciples, inquiring of Jesus how it was that their endeavours to cast the devil out of the epileptic boy had proved unsuccessful, were told by Him that their failure was owing to the scantiness of their faith; for faith was a necessary and a sure condition of ability to perform mighty works. "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast it out? And he saith unto them, Because of your little faith; for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible

unto you" (xvii. 19, 20). The disciples, we must remember, had received from our Lord "authority over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness;" but they had not, as it appears, yet fully learned that the condition of the exercise of this authority was a living faith.

What, now, are we here to understand by the faith in which the disciples were deficient? Apparently it was realization of the true position in which they stood, as persons to whom great authority had been committed. The gift of exorcising and of healing had not been so bestowed upon them as to be inherent in themselves, and to be made use of when and where they would; but it was a power delegated and entrusted to them as God's agents and as God's creatures. The due employment of the power was required of them by God, and for the ability to employ it duly they were ever dependent upon Him. And the faith which was found defective in them appears to be a consciousness and realization of this their position as God's agents and fellow-workers with Him—agents and fellow-workers dependent upon Him for strength to execute the work entrusted to them, and always able, through prayer, to get their needs supplied. Men who apprehend by faith that some difficult enterprise which lies before them is a task to the performance of which they are called by God, and who apprehend at the same time that God's servants are not always able of themselves even to do those things which He undoubtedly requires to be done, may by prayer to Him secure that the difficult task in question shall certainly be accomplished. Even a faith consisting in no more than a realization of certain elementary religious truths, and being therefore comparable to a small grain of mustard seed, will suffice to make possible apparently stupendous undertakings. The

elementary truths which must be realized are (1) that, whatever work presents itself as the rightful object of endeavour, is work which God calls upon man as His agent to perform ; (2) that man is dependent upon God for daily help and strength to do the difficult things that are required of him ; and (3) that God will certainly, in answer to His servant's prayer, cause that the task which He has committed to him shall be properly fulfilled.

In like manner, in connection with the cursing of the barren fig tree, our Lord again points out to His disciples the potency of faith ; adding, however, on this occasion the following words : " And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive " (xxi. 22). These added words, while confirming the explanation of faith, as including prayer, given in the preceding paragraph, appear at first sight to make something less of faith than it is there represented to be. They appear to identify faith with mere confidence that prayer will be answered, without reference to the purpose of the prayer.

But what, let us consider, is the condition of justifiable confidence—what, indeed, is the condition of being able to feel confident—that a favourable answer will be vouchsafed to prayer ? It is not, surely, any general conviction that the will of man is endued with power to regulate the decrees of God. Rather, it is a conviction, on the part of him who prays, that his will is, in the hour of supplication, in accordance with the Will of Him to whom he prays. And to what are we to look as the ground of this conviction ? Only, it would seem, to a firm assurance that the ends which are made by the suppliant the objects of his prayer are ends which God has bidden him endeavour to attain. Belief, then, that prayer will meet with the desired answer appears to be equivalent to faith, only in so far as this belief is based upon a person's knowledge that he is

called by God to perform that special work, the accomplishment of which he makes the object of his supplication.

III. St. Matthew's account of our Lord's discourse in connection with the cursing of the barren fig tree is in general agreement with that given by St. Mark, except that we find in the latter a notable addition. After writing "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them," St. Mark goes on to record this further saying of our Lord: "And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (xi. 25). If we accept the view that the words of the verse next following, given in the authorized version, but rejected by the Revisers, were not actually spoken by our Lord—the words, namely, "But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses"—still it seems sufficiently clear, that forgiveness of injuries is laid down as a condition of legitimate certitude that trespasses will be forgiven.

There would seem to have been in our Lord's thought a close connection between the power of commanding success in prayer and forgiveness of those who do us wrong. Whether or not He is regarding God's forgiveness of our own trespasses as a particular end committed to our efforts, and through this link associating forgiveness of injuries with the attainment of all objects of prayerful enterprise, the association is one which He seems to have wished to impress upon His disciples. He qualifies His declaration, that confident assurance of answered prayer will be followed by an answer, by the implication, that this confident assurance must be accompanied by the love that extends forgiveness to those at whose hands we suffer wrong.

We have already seen, in the preceding section, that

confident assurance of success with God is contingent upon ability to regard our ends as commended and entrusted to us by Him as His servants. The decision of the will by which we adopt them as our own must be a decision in conscious harmony with the decrees of God. A man of faith is one who looks upon his daily work as work committed to him by God. He is also, as we now see, one who works and lives in a spirit of love to all persons with whom he comes in contact ; for the love sufficient to forgive must evidently include all lesser manifestations of a loving spirit. The faith, then, in God of persons who are professing followers of Christ—and it is the faith of such that our Lord seems specially to have had in mind—is essentially a faith that has bound up with it no small measure of brotherly good-will. In the absence of love all other activities are, for God's purposes, of little count. A faith in God that has in its composition, or in close attachment to it, no constant endeavour after brotherly good will is but a spurious imitation of the faith to which is guaranteed the performance of mighty works.

IV. There is another view of faith—not, however, very different from that considered in the second section—which seems to be presented in St. Matthew's Gospel. Our Lord, in an address to the Scribes and Pharisees, tells them that they have left undone "the weightier matters of the law, judgement, and mercy, and faith" (xxiii. 23). Now by comparing this saying with passages in the Old Testament, in which, out of three specified requirements, two, as in the words before us, are in each case "judgement and mercy," we have some ground for concluding that the third is an equivalent for what on this occasion our Lord meant by faith. The passages are :—"Therefore turn thou to thy God : keep mercy and judgement, and wait on thy God continually" (Hosea xii. 6) ; and, "He hath shewed

thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?" (Micah vi. 8). From a comparison of our Lord's words with these passages, we may reasonably infer a probability that the term faith is used by Him in the sense of waiting on God and walking humbly with Him. And by this we may perhaps understand the ordering of life in submission to and dependence upon the Will of God.

V. There are in the Greek two words with which our inquiry is specially concerned, namely, the noun *πίστις*, faith, and the verb *πιστεύω*, I put faith in or believe. But, while the noun is invariably used in the New Testament in some religious sense, this is far from being the case with the corresponding verb. Believing is by no means always synonymous with having religious faith ; the verb, unlike the noun, being frequently employed to carry with it the merely secular meaning of assenting to statements made by one man to another. Many passages, therefore, in which the verb occurs have no direct bearing upon our present investigation. When, however, the context makes it clear that the word is used in the sense of doing something which is an essential part of the religious life, then we may judge that believing is to be taken as equivalent to having religious faith, and we may proceed to consider, as in the case of the noun, what aspect of faith it is that is set before us.

Such a religious use we plainly have in the following passage of St. Mark :—" He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe : in my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take

up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover " (xvi. 15—18). Believing the gospel, here announced by our Lord as a condition of being saved from condemnation, must certainly be a very important part of that activity of consciousness which constitutes the entirety of faith. Presumably, too, as being followed by the bestowal of special powers, it must bear a close relation to the particular exercise of faith which we have already seen to be efficacious for the performance of mighty works. What, then, are we to understand to be the exact signification of believing the gospel ?

By the gospel is plainly meant that "gospel of God" which, as St. Mark tells us at the beginning of his narrative, "Jesus came into Galilee preaching, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye, and believe in the gospel." It is the good news concerning the introduction of a closer relationship between God and man, concerning the establishment of a Divine kingdom upon earth, of which kingdom mankind were invited to enrol themselves as citizens. Or, in other words, it is the promulgation of fundamental facts and principles in accordance with which God's dealings with mankind were to be newly regulated, and which were to become the constitutional basis of a new society, a regenerate society promised and foretold in the pages of ancient prophecy. Without going outside St. Mark's record we may readily ascertain the nature of most of these fundamental facts and principles.

In the first place, the human founder of the new society or kingdom is no other than the Son of God. Having been crucified as Son of man, and having, as He Himself foretold, after three days risen from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of



God. And sitting, as the Lord Jesus in glorified human form, at God's right hand He watches over and works with His followers here below. He is for evermore the living Head of the kingdom of God or Christian Church.

In the second place, all true and loyal members of the Church are in a state of salvation. That is to say, their sins are forgiven, they are baptized by Jesus with the Holy Ghost, and are made inheritors of eternal life.

In the third place, no person may claim to be accounted a true and loyal member of the Church, who is not repentant for sins that are past, and steadfastly resolved upon leading a pure and upright life, who is not compassionate and forgiving towards his fellow men, who does not look to God for strength to perform His Will, and who is not ready to follow Jesus in the pain and self-surrender of His earthly life.

The foregoing doctrines are the principal ones which St. Mark, with more or less plainness, puts before us ; and, though they may not be said to comprise the whole of the fundamental facts and principles of the Christian Church, they are sufficient for our purpose of ascertaining the kind or kinds of proposition the acceptance of which is a constituent part of religious faith. Having ascertained this, we have next to see in what way it is that faith accepts them. Having learned, that is, what St. Mark would have us understand by the gospel, we have to pass on to the consideration of what is meant by believing it. For believing the gospel is, as we have seen, one manifestation of that activity of consciousness which is spoken of under the name of faith.

The general characteristic of the doctrines which compose the gospel appears to be, that they are, in whole or in part, doctrines which the exercise of human reason would never have discovered. Some of them even seem

to contradict conclusions at which reason has arrived. Reason, drawing its conclusions from evidence of sense, or from evidence of sense together with certain intuitive elements of knowledge, would never in its onward progress reach the conception of an only-begotten Son of the world's Creator deigning to clothe Himself in human form, and in that form submitting to suffering and death. Nor, apparently, could it ever satisfy itself that Jesus the prophet of Nazareth, crucified by Pilate at the instigation of the Jews, rose presently from the grave to which his body was consigned, and as glorified Son of man ascended into heaven. Rather would reason, apart from revelation, judge that the possession of almighty power was altogether incompatible with submission to humiliation ; and that the wearing of a human form precluded the possibility of transcending the established conditions of humanity. So, again, reason could never propound an ideal human life consisting in altogether unique service and self-surrender, an ideal life in which ministering to the welfare of mankind entirely supplants demand for recompense. Rather would reason, apart from revelation, say that it is a fundamental principle of social conduct, that no man is called upon to exhibit benevolence and public spirit in much greater degree than will somehow be requited to him ; nature forbidding the moral agent to make such sacrifice of his own well-being.

The mind, then, in that activity of it which we call faith, assents to certain propositions which are beyond the scope of unaided reason, and which may seem even to be subversive of its conclusions. How it is, in the nature of things, that the mind thus works, what are the conditions and what the process of giving its assent, will be a subject of full investigation in our second Book. At present we are in a position only to notice what we may gather from

St. Mark as to any instrumentality by which the effect is brought to pass.

In the first place, then, we are far from being led to suppose that the mind can accept propositions of the kind under consideration without some sort of evidence being presented to it in confirmation of bare announcement. And in the second place, we are distinctly given to understand that the evidence may be quite sufficient to convince without being such as is called demonstrative. The propositions in question were to be promulgated by persons who had themselves become persuaded of their truth, and testimony was to be itself confirmed by miracle. Testimony and miracle were the external evidence by means of which, in the first days of Christianity, its doctrines were to receive the mind's assent. This evidence, however, would be far from being necessarily and universally convincing. For the hearers of the gospel are represented as consisting of two distinct classes, those who believe and are baptized, and those who disbelieve. Faith, then, meaning assent to certain undiscoverable and undemonstrable propositions, is an activity of consciousness which is not participated in by all to whom these propositions are presented.

VI. Seeing that the assent which would be given by some and withheld by others is a mental act, there would seem to be some ground for supposing that the giving or withholding it is a matter dependent only on the mental constitution and mental history of the particular agent. But, however this may be with regard to secular propositions which, not being demonstrable, yet meet with some extent of credence, it is clear that the fundamental doctrines of the gospel must be taken to appeal to some part of consciousness which is more than simply intellectual. Of them it cannot, in general, be truly said

that the reception or rejection of them is to be referred to nothing but mental causes. St. Mark supplies us, if not with a declaration, at all events with a clear indication, that belief in the gospel has a moral basis, is really at bottom a moral act. It is, it appears, in some measure dependent upon free-will, and also upon desire. "Jesus came," we are told, "preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye, and believe in the gospel."

Jesus, it will be observed, is represented as laying an injunction to believe upon those to whom He preached. He speaks to them in the imperative mood. He addresses them as persons who are voluntary agents, having it in their power to choose between assenting to and dissenting from the message which He brings. He regards their mental acceptance or rejection of His gospel as being, at least in some degree, dependent upon the free action of their own will. And this view of their position is confirmed in His declaration, after the close of His earthly ministry, of the consequences of disbelief in the teaching of His apostles : "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Condemnation by God, we distinctly feel and know, is the consequence of conduct which has relation to man's moral nature, of conduct which it is in his power to avoid. Belief, then, so far as it may be regarded as the alternative of disbelief, though a mental act, is yet dependent upon determination of the will.

Again, according to the message which Jesus preached, before belief there comes in the order of time repentance. Belief seems thus to be put before us as having in another way some dependence upon will, and also as having some dependence upon feeling or desire. The natural preparation, so to speak, for the reception of the gospel is the awakening men to a consciousness of their estrangement

from God, the exciting in them a determination to serve Him better, and an anxious desire for the blessings of forgiveness. So John the Baptist, as Christ's forerunner, is commissioned by God to preach repentance ; and the twelve disciples, sent forth by Jesus by two and two, go out and preach that men should repent. Prior to belief, then, in the fundamental doctrines of the gospel we may, it would seem, naturally look for some steadfastness of resolve to obey God's Will and some earnest longing for the salvation which He promises.

That belief, or intellectual assent to the doctrines of the gospel, is in some way associated with and dependent upon a favourable attitude of feeling towards them, seems also to be implied elsewhere. It seems to be implied in language in which the conduct of the disciples is commented on when they showed themselves wanting in spiritual insight. St. Mark tells us that, when our Lord cautioned them against the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod, and they mistakenly supposed Him to be alluding to their oversight in forgetting to supply themselves with bread, He addressed them thus : " Why reason ye, because ye have no bread ? Do ye not yet perceive, neither understand ? have ye your heart hardened ? " (viii. 17). So also, in recording the miracle of Jesus walking on the sea, he himself remarks, " They were sore amazed in themselves ; for they understood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened " (vi. 51, 52). And, again, he tells us that, when the disciples had refused to credit the reports of those who testified of the Lord's resurrection, Jesus " upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen " (xvi. 14). Hardness of heart clearly seems to be spoken of as if it were a ground of the want of under-

standing and the unbelief which the disciples manifested. Whence, apparently, we may conclude that belief in the Divine nature and mission of Jesus Christ is, in general, dependent upon a certain condition of the moral constitution, upon an absence, namely, of hardness of heart or insensibility of feeling in relation to moral and spiritual questions.

## CHAPTER III.

### ST. LUKE.

I. THE various aspects of faith which we have already noticed are all of them to be found more or less plainly in St. Luke's Gospel. They comprise, it will be remembered, faith in Jesus on the part of those who recognized the divinity of His life on earth ; faith in God on the part of persons striving to do Him service, whether by active effort, or by humble attendance upon His Will ; faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Founder of a Divine society ; and faith regarded as being an activity of the consciousness to some extent conditional upon will and feeling. Before we proceed to consider what else St. Luke may have to teach us on the subject of faith, it may be well to refer briefly to passages in his Gospel in which these several aspects are placed before us.

Of the first of them, namely, insight into the super-human or Divine nature of the Son of man, examples are readily to be found. It will be sufficient to recall the narratives, of the repentant woman who anointed the Lord's feet with ointment and whose sins were forgiven her (vii. 50) ; of the woman who, having an issue of blood, touched the border of His garment and immediately was cured (viii. 48) ; and of the blind man to whom, at his urgent request, Jesus gave sight (xviii. 42). To each of these our Lord addressed the words, "Thy faith hath saved thee."

Secondly, faith in God, carrying with it the power to perform in His service difficult tasks, even that most difficult task of forgiving injuries, appears to be the faith spoken of in the following passage: "And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea; and it would have obeyed you" (xvii. 5, 6). The passage is immediately preceded by a solemn exhortation to forgiveness of injuries, and immediately followed by a short parable in which the disciples are taught to regard themselves—whatever they may succeed in doing—as no more than unprofitable servants. Hence we may, perhaps, rightly judge that the faith spoken of is a faith which is requisite for, and which involves, the difficult work of forgiving injuries, and that this faith is a mark of persons who acknowledge their obligation to render to God service and allegiance.

Thirdly, our Lord, when He makes mention of faith in connection with His parable of the importunate widow, seems to be speaking of a faith which is represented by patient and hopeful submission to God's Will. "He spake a parable unto them," we are told, "to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint;" and at the close of the parable He says, "Shall not God avenge his elect, which cry to him day and night, and he is long-suffering over them? I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Howbeit when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (xviii. 1, 7, 8).

Fourthly, in St. Luke's account of the parable of the sower there are certain words which certainly seem to imply that faith, regarded as the activity of the consciousness necessary to salvation, involves mental assent to principles of the kingdom of God or Christian Church.



For our Lord, explaining the parable to His disciples, is reported to have spoken as follows: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And those by the wayside are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved" (viii. 10—12). Belief in the word of God, or mysteries of His kingdom, is represented as essential to salvation, and is therefore, it would seem, undoubtedly to be understood as being a manifestation of true religious faith.

And fifthly, there are not wanting indications that faith is an activity of the consciousness dependent in some degree upon will and feeling. Three points may be mentioned in this connection. In the first place, in the parable just referred to there follow after the verses quoted these words: "And those on the rock are they which, when they have heard, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." Here failure of faith, resulting from yielding to temptation, is clearly associated with man's moral constitution; though indeed it is not apparent, whether it is the will and desire to believe that fail, or whether unbelief follows upon absence of will and desire to live conformably to the laws of God. In the second place, the woman whose sins were forgiven in consequence of her faith was manifestly a person whose faith, or confidence in the Divine power and love of Jesus, was accompanied by a very strong desire that some word of pardon should be spoken by Him. It was, moreover, associated with a strong feeling of attachment to Him; for, while we read that it was her faith that saved her, we

also read that her sins were forgiven because she loved much. The association of faith with love is clear; though in what precise relation each may be supposed to stand to the other is not here apparent. In the third place, a certain influence of feeling in producing assent to the principles of the gospel seems to be indicated by our Lord in His conversation with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. "O foolish men," He says, "and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?" (xxiv. 25, 26). He seems to imply by the words He uses that not only the mind, or seat of pure thought, but also the heart, or seat of feeling, is concerned in the production of intellectual assent to truths concerning Himself.

II. Assuming St. Luke to be the author of the Acts of the Apostles, we may proceed to consider in this chapter what light is thrown in that book upon the subject of our inquiry.

We may notice first that faith, regarded as the one essential condition of salvation or admission to the privileges promised in the gospel, is spoken of as belief on the Lord Jesus Christ. "Believe," is the announcement to the jailor at Philippi, "on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved" (xvi. 31). The question, then, at once arises, What are we to understand by believing on the Lord Jesus?

Belief on the Lord Jesus must certainly include, if it does not wholly consist in, mental assent to certain fundamental doctrines of the gospel. Nor is it difficult to ascertain from the Acts of the Apostles what these are. They, or the chief of them, are plainly declared to be—the resurrection from the dead and exaltation to God's right hand of the spotless martyr Jesus Christ, and God's

bestowal upon mankind, through His agency, of remission of their sins. Jesus Christ was represented by St. Peter and St. Paul, to the audiences whom they addressed, as a living Lord through whom salvation was to be obtained. "Jesus of Nazareth," says St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost, "a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay. . . . This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear" (ii. 22, 23, 32, 33). And to the Jewish council he speaks thus: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins" (v. 30, 31).

Similar to this testimony of St. Peter is that delivered by St. Paul. His address in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia contains the following words: "Though they found no cause of death in him, yet asked they of Pilate that he should be slain. . . . We bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, how that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that He raised up Jesus. . . . Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins" (xiii. 28, 32, 33, 38).

Paul and Silas, we are told, having declared to the Philippian jailor that salvation was dependent upon belief on the Lord Jesus, went on to "speak the word of the Lord unto him." The doctrines contained in the passages

just quoted must certainly, we may conclude, have formed a part of their teaching on this occasion ; and mental assent on the part of the jailor must certainly, we may also conclude, have been regarded by them as constituting at least a part of that belief which was the object of their exhortations. But did belief, in their regard, mean nothing more than mental assent to the doctrines of the gospel ? Apparently such assent is far from being the whole of that faith, or belief on Jesus, upon which, in the apostles' view, salvation was dependent.

We gather from the conclusion of St. Mark's narration, that there are two conditions pronounced and ordained by our Lord to be generally essential to salvation. Of these, assent to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity is one ; the other is submission to the rite of Christian baptism. Comparing the language of the Acts of the Apostles with that of the Gospel of St. Mark, we must, apparently, if we are to harmonize the teaching of the two books, conclude that, while belief in Christian doctrines means in the latter only mental assent to them, in the former it signifies, in addition, baptism into the Christian Church. But this is really no more than to say that mental assent is regarded as being certainly followed by, and thus including, the action which necessarily commends itself as natural and appropriate to an instructed and assenting person. For undoubtedly, to submit to baptism is the rational and appropriate consequence of yielding assent to the doctrines of the gospel, if in the kingdom of God or Christian Church is to be found salvation, and if baptism is, by the ordinance of Christ, the necessary rite of initiation into that kingdom. Salvation through assent to doctrine which sets forth the Church as the ark of refuge, and through the practical step of taking refuge in that ark, is, apparently, the meaning of that saying of our Lord, " He that

believeth and is baptized shall be saved," which St. Mark records. And we cannot suppose that the teaching of the apostles, epitomized in the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved," was in any way divergent from and inconsistent with that of their Lord and Master.

We have, then, good ground for supposing that belief on the Lord Jesus, regarded as the one condition of salvation, must be taken to include submission to the rite of baptism, to include, that is, the reasonable action of definitely entering upon that new state of life which the mind has recognized as affording the salvation wished for. And we have in various passages of the Acts of the Apostles strong confirmatory evidence that this is what the apostles actually taught. We find baptism urged as a matter of the first importance upon those to whom the gospel was being preached; and we find it mentioned as if reception of it followed naturally upon assent to the doctrines of Christianity.

Thus, on the Day of Pentecost, when the question is put, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter makes answer, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation." "They then," the narrative goes on to say, "that received his word were baptized" (ii. 37—41). Of the people of Samaria we are told, that "when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (viii. 12). In reference to the conversion of St. Paul, we read as follows: "The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou

hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (xxii. 14—16). And of the Philippian jailor, to whom Paul and Silas addressed the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house," we are further told, "They spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately" (xvi. 31—33).

It may here be worth while to remark that the slightly ambiguous use of the expression, "to believe"—meaning, as it does, at one time to yield intellectual assent, at another time to yield intellectual assent and follow it up with appropriate behaviour—affords some explanation of a certain grave misapprehension of gospel principles. It is, apparently, in part from this that there has arisen the strange notion that a man's salvation is dependent only upon his ability to believe that he is saved. Belief in Jesus is taken to mean, as regards its saving efficacy, nothing more than intellectual assent, not to the body of revealed truth concerning Him, but to the particular proposition that He is the Saviour of all who believe in Him—of all, that is, who believe that He is their Saviour. "Only believe that you are saved, and you are saved," is the curiously erroneous doctrine that has been, or that seems to have been, sometimes taught. It is scarcely too much to say of it, thus baldly stated, that it is intellectually absurd. For salvation must be conceived of either as conditional upon some action on the part of man, or as not conditional. In the former case, we cannot conceive of it as actually secured, that is, we cannot believe that it is secured, until the condition is fulfilled. In the latter case, we must conceive of it as secured, that is, we must believe

that it is secured, without the fulfilment of any condition whatsoever. To conceive of it as not secured until the conception of it as secured is formed, or, in other words, to secure it only by believing it to be secured, is apparently, for man at least, an intellectual impossibility. It is, apparently, an exercise by human thought of a creative power that does not belong to it. It is the making that to be, which is not until it is conceived of as being, and then is only in consequence of its being so conceived of.

Doubtless many, or all, of those who thus in speech misrepresent God's way of salvation really hold, though they may themselves be unaware that they do so, that some sort of personal attachment to Jesus is necessarily associated in the consciousness of the believer with intellectual assent. Their soteriology has thus in it an amount of truth which in the bare statement of it does not appear. Of this attachment to the Person of Jesus Christ, and the issues of it, there will be occasion to speak at some length hereafter. At present it can only be pointed out that the confidence connected with it is a very different thing from the impossible state of consciousness in which a person is said to believe that he is saved simply on account of believing that he is saved.

It should, perhaps, be added that conviction of salvation may, of course, be supposed without absurdity to be one condition of salvation. It is only when it is put forward as the sole condition that the theory becomes intellectually impossible.

III. There are certain passages in the Acts of the Apostles which indicate that the opportunity and ability to accept the gospel message, if not the actual acceptance of it, are properly to be regarded as the gift of God, or the gift of Christ. Thus God is spoken of as calling unto Him those to whom He had promised the gift of the Holy Ghost

(ii. 38, 39), and as opening a door of faith unto the Gentiles (xiv. 27). Again, we read that the Lord added day by day those that were being saved (ii. 47); and of those who after the death of Stephen preached the word to the Greeks, we are told that the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord (xi. 21). Now it may no doubt be the case that what the narrators here intend to attribute to the direct and special intervention of God, or Christ, is only the opportunity which He vouchsafed to certain persons of hearing the gospel preached with convincing power. The special influence of His grace, it may be said, was manifested in the action of those who preached, rather than in that of those who listened to and believed their preaching.

There are, however, other passages, in which we seem to be more or less clearly taught, that the power to believe the gospel when it is preached is in some measure due to Divine influence upon the consciousness. One of them is this: "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (xi. 18). Repentance, as we have seen, was apparently regarded by our Lord as a necessary preliminary to accepting the gospel; and if God by a special intervention grants repentance—for surely it does not necessarily follow in ordinary course upon hearing the exhortations and promises of the gospel—then He may be considered as, by this special intervention, granting the faith which may follow upon it. Another passage is one which speaks plainly of Divine influence upon the heart of a certain woman: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul" (xvi. 14). And, in addition to these, may be quoted a confirmatory passage from the concluding chapter of St.



Luke's Gospel : " Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures ; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day " (xxiv. 45, 46).

Doubtless it would be inadmissible to infer from the foregoing passages, that acceptance of the gospel message is in all cases attributable more or less to the direct influence of God, or Christ, upon the consciousness. But at the same time there seems to be no sufficient reason for supposing that they indicate any very exceptional action on the part of God, or Christ, in relation to those who become believers. Apparently we are justified in considering faith, as understood by St. Luke, to be an activity of the consciousness which is, at least in many cases, in some measure due to the direct operation of God, or Christ, upon the individual believer.

IV. We have taken notice of a faith in Christ which consists in recognition of and confidence in His superhuman or Divine nature, on the part of persons who met with Him during His earthly ministry ; and also of a faith in Him which consists in the practical acknowledgment of certain truths relating to His Divine nature and work, on the part of persons who listened to the apostolic preaching of the gospel. In addition to these two kinds of faith in Him—between which, indeed, there would seem to be no essential difference, the form of manifestation being dependent only upon circumstances—there appears to be another, proceeding from a different source in the consciousness of the believer. It is this that was briefly alluded to when, in the present chapter, mention was made of an attachment to the Person of the risen Lord as being an experience of the Christian life. Preparation for a discussion of the subject may here be begun by pointing out that, though St. Luke is apparently at no pains to call

attention to this kind of faith, yet there are indications in the Acts of the Apostles of its being well known as a kind of faith possessing a distinctive character of its own.

This new kind of faith it is that Peter seems to have in mind when he speaks thus concerning the conversion of the Gentiles: "God, which knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith" (xv. 8, 9). Here the faith spoken of as the instrument of purification appears to be, not the faith which indirectly purifies by leading men to become followers of Jesus Christ, and so recipients of the Holy Ghost, but, rather, a faith which more directly purifies by being associated in some way with the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost. And similarly, a sanctifying faith, which has existence only in persons who have already become Christ's followers, seems to be the faith Paul has in mind when, in his defence before Agrippa, he recounts words spoken to him by the Lord concerning his mission to the Gentiles:—"The Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me" (xxvi. 17, 18).

It may be further remarked that this view—that the faith in Christ which leads men to accept Him as their Lord and Saviour and to be baptized into His name is not to be wholly identified, as regards its nature and origin, with the faith in Him of which they are afterwards possessed—appears to receive some corroboration from the use, in certain passages, of a past tense of the verb believe. Thus we read that Paul and Barnabas, revisiting certain of their converts, "commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed" (xiv. 23); that Apollos "helped them much

which had believed through grace" (xviii. 27) ; that Paul inquired of certain disciples, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" and when they answered, "Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given," he inquired further, "Into what then were ye baptized?" (xix. 2, 3). The employment of the past tense in these passages seems to indicate, that the belief or faith in Christ, which was proclaimed by the apostles as essential to salvation, was a belief or faith having its special culmination when the convert, submitting to the rite of baptism, became a member of the Christian Church. Consequently the faith in Christ which characterizes those who have become Christians, and is fitly spoken of in the present tense, appears to be in some essential point distinguishable from this. This latter kind of faith we seem to have mentioned—though the English translation does not make it clear—when we are told that "all that believed (*πιστεύοντες*) were together, and had all things common" (ii. 44) ; and, again, when Paul speaks of having "imprisoned and beaten in every synagogue them that believed (*πιστεύοντας*) on Christ" (xxii. 19). Assent to the doctrines of the gospel, leading to baptism, and of course supposed to continue after baptism, appears, then, to be only one kind of faith in Christ spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles ; there being another kind—concerning the nature of which we shall learn more as we proceed with our investigation—attributable exclusively to persons who have already become members of His Church.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ST. JOHN.

I. IT is noticeable that, while in St. John's Gospel the verb πιστεύω is met with nearly a hundred times, the noun πίστις does not occur once. In the Epistles but one instance of it is to be found, this being in a passage which will be presently considered. In the Revelation it appears four times, but nowhere in such a manner as to call for remark.

The verb when used—as it mostly is—in a religious sense is commonly followed by the preposition *on* (or *in*), as in the passages, “Many believed *on* his name, beholding his signs which he did” (ii. 23); “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth *on* him should not perish, but have eternal life” (iii. 16). Sometimes, however, it stands alone, as in the following passages:—“Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe” (iv. 48); “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life” (vi. 47).

Understanding, then, that mention of faith is made by means of the verb “believe,” we may notice first, that St. John writes, as do the other Evangelists, of faith in God as well as of faith in Christ. This distinction, let it be here remarked, appears to be one which it is of the utmost importance to keep in view, if we would rightly

understand the New Testament teaching on the subject of faith. It may be, and no doubt is, the case that these two kinds of faith are intimately connected the one with the other; and yet, unless the mind accustoms itself to recognize clearly that a distinction exists between them in the thought of the New Testament writers, there is danger of falling into grave theological error. We shall presently have under consideration the nature of the relation between faith in God and faith in Christ, as it is exhibited in the writings of St. John. In the meantime, in order to show that they are to a certain extent distinct activities or modes of activity, not to be confounded one with the other, let it suffice to quote these words spoken by our Lord to His disciples:—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (xiv. 1).

Leaving the subject of faith in God, we go on to notice that St. John, like St. Luke, has occasion to think and speak of three different classes of persons professing to be adherents of Jesus Christ, or, in other words, of three different attitudes of adhesion to Him. There were, first, the persons who, meeting with Him during His life on earth, recognized more or less adequately His claims to their allegiance. There were, secondly, those who in consequence of hearing His death and resurrection preached were prepared to acknowledge Him as their Saviour and their Lord. And there were, thirdly, baptized members of the Christian Church who were systematically striving day by day to follow Him and do His work. And thus St. John, like St. Luke, seems to think and speak of three different descriptions of faith in Christ, three different modes of recognition of Him. First, there is the faith which consists in apprehension of His super-human or Divine nature, without any knowledge of His Passion. Secondly, there is the faith which causes the

believer to seek for admission into the Church which He, by means of His death and resurrection, established upon earth as the haven of salvation. And thirdly, there is the faith which animates those who through the sacred rite of baptism have become members of the Church, and who with loyalty and devotion look ever upward to Him who is the Church's Head. Let us briefly consider some of the indications in St. John's writings of each of these three modes of consciousness.

Of the first kind we seem to have mention made, in the case of the disciples after the performance of our Lord's first miracle, and in the case of Nathanael on his first meeting with Him. "This beginning of his signs," we read, "did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him" (ii. 11): "Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee underneath the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these" (i. 48—50). What degree of appreciation of the glory manifested by Jesus in His words and works was sufficient to constitute faith we are not expressly told; but we seem to gather that nothing less than some recognition of His nature as Divine, and not merely superhuman, was accounted worthy of the name. The nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum had some confidence in the Lord's power and willingness to heal; and yet, apparently, his confidence was not such as to deserve to be called faith. For "Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe"; and it is not until after the recovery of his son in consequence of the

mere speaking of a word, that "himself believed, and his whole house" (iv. 48, 53).

There are several passages in which the second kind of faith in Jesus Christ is spoken of, the faith which, taking cognizance of His accomplished Passion, is an essential condition and instrument of salvation. Of these the most striking is the following, consisting of words spoken by our Lord in His conversation with Nicodemus :—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (iii. 14—16). That this saving faith must include the seeking admission into the Church by baptism, seems sufficiently clear from an utterance of our Lord's in the course of this same conversation: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (iii. 5). Between this and the former kind of faith in Christ, each being regarded as a mode of activity of the consciousness, there appears to be no essential difference. What difference there is between them is a difference only of opportunity and circumstance. The man who in the time of His earthly ministry believed in Jesus as a Teacher sent from God was doubtless, in almost all cases, a man who afterwards believed in Him as a risen Saviour and became a baptized member of His Church. We have, apparently, an indication of this natural progress from one description of faith to the other in the following words spoken by our Lord, and the comment made upon them by St. John: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him were to receive: for

the Spirit was not yet given ; because Jesus was not yet glorified " (vii. 38, 39). Here the persons spoken of seem to be those who, at the time of our Lord's utterance, were believers only in the former sense of recognizing His Divine Mission and owning allegiance to Him. And it seems to be clearly implied that they, as a body, would afterwards, when the Passion of Jesus was accomplished, be baptized into His Name, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The third description of faith in Christ, the faith which belongs distinctively and exclusively to baptized members of His Church, appears to be the faith spoken of by St. John when at the beginning of his Gospel he writes thus : " As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God " (i. 12, 13). Here the word "received," in the past tense, seems to have reference to ante-baptismal faith, faith leading to the new birth in baptism ; while the word "believe," in the present tense, seems to describe the faith of those who have become recipients of the new birth.

And apparently it is this same faith of which St. John speaks in his first Epistle, when he writes, " Whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world : and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." He is looking, as the context seems to show, upon faith as a new power enabling the Christian to keep Christ's new commandment of love. He goes on to say, " And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood " (v. 4—6). The faith in question is represented, then, as belonging only to



persons who are begotten of God, and as involving belief in Jesus Christ as One who came by water and by blood. Now, first, we can scarcely be in error in identifying those who are said to be begotten of God with those who are elsewhere spoken of as being born of water and of the Spirit ; those whom we understand to be persons admitted through baptism into the kingdom of God or Christian Church. And secondly, we are not, perhaps, mistaken if we see in the description of Jesus Christ, as One who came by water and by blood, a reference to His death upon the Cross and to His baptism in Jordan, together with a reference to His institution of the rite of baptism for His followers. Thus interpreting the words, we may further hold, that a person whose fixed habit it is to believe in Jesus, as having suffered for man upon the Cross and as having instituted for man the rite of baptism, cannot be other than a person who has himself become a baptized member of the Church which Christ purchased with His blood. The faith, then, that overcomes the world is seen, from two points of view, to be distinctively the faith of a member of Christ's Church. It is the faith of one who is begotten of God; and it is the faith of one who has made practical recognition of Christ's Passion and His institution of the rite of baptism.

II. Faith in Jesus Christ, of whatever kind, obviously involves a mental assent, more or less explicit, to certain exceptional facts and doctrines. Those persons, for example, who believed on Him in consequence of His words and works must have assented, at least in some dim fashion, to what He affirmed to be His relation to the Father ; and persons who in consequence of the preaching of the apostles became members of His Church must have assented to the historical fact of His resurrection from the dead. But by no means all who heard His words, and

saw the signs and wonders which He performed, became thereby assured of His Divinity ; and by no means all to whom it was authoritatively told that He was risen from the grave accepted the statement as a truth to be believed. The question, then, naturally arises, How was it that, under the same apparent conditions of hearing and seeing, some persons were convinced by what they heard and saw, and others remained quite unconvinced? We have in St. John's Gospel not a little information given us on this subject. Let us, therefore, so far as we can do so in the light of what we there read, consider how it comes to pass that the mind yields assent to facts and doctrines of the kind in question. Afterwards we will consider how it comes to pass that the mind withholds assent from the same facts and doctrines.

The mysterious facts and doctrines of the gospel are of course, from the nature of them, not demonstrable truths. They are not transferable, by means of commonly accepted formulas and data, from one mind to another. Not being wholly based upon evidence supplied by sense and by primary intuitions of the consciousness, they are incapable of objective proof. And yet, apparently, a firm and rational assent may be given to them in accordance with the laws which govern the working of a healthy mind. By these laws—which will come under our notice in the second Book—the mind is able to reach sure conclusions otherwise than through the methods familiar to the logician, making use of evidence of a different kind from that required in logical demonstration. Apparently, a person may be fully and rationally convinced of the truths proclaimed by the gospel, though he may be powerless to justify by argument his conviction to another, and even incapable of clearly realizing to himself all the steps by which it has been reached.

Before proceeding to take note of what St. John puts before us as the kind of evidence upon which assent is rationally based, let us just observe what he has to say concerning the firmness and fulness of assent. In several passages language is made use of which seems to declare, that the assent which is involved in faith is by no means the expression of intellectual levity or weakness, but is a rational and complete activity of a healthy mind finding and being satisfied with an object that has actual existence. For we find it spoken of as seemingly equivalent to having knowledge of the thing assented to. Thus Peter is recorded as saying to Jesus, "We have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God" (vi. 69). Jesus says to the Jews, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (x. 37, 38). And the following passage occurs in a prayer offered by Jesus to the Father: "That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me" (xvii. 21—23).

It is not intended, be it understood, to consider here on what evidence it is that the gospel is reasonably believed in the present day. What in this place we are concerned to note is no more than the indications given by St. John of the evidence on which men received it in his own time.

The external or objective evidence to which our attention is directed is of two main kinds, each in turn

corroborating the other ; namely, the evidence of testimony, and the evidence of circumstance. With regard to testimony it may be remarked, that men have, in general, strong natural disposition to yield assent to whatever is reported to them by even one person, if that person manifests adequate knowledge and a truthful character ; and to whatever is reported to them by persons of whose information and credibility they can form no certain estimate, if several independent witnesses concur in affirming the same thing. Direct testimony of the Divine Nature and Mission of Jesus Christ began with the utterances of John the Baptist and of our Lord Himself, declaring who He was and the meaning of the work He came to do. And such testimony—manifestly that of witnesses of unblemished character and some intimate acquaintance with the subject of which they testified—must reasonably have gone far to convince many of their immediate hearers. Further, this testimony, travelling afterwards from mouth to mouth and from mind to mind, commented on and discussed in the light of other evidence, and thus creating a body of independent testimony borne by those who accepted and passed it on, must have had, in a secondary manner, powerful influence upon the minds of many. Even as the Apostles were delegated to “bear witness because ye have been with me from the beginning” (xv. 27), so must the common audiences of Jesus have contained among them persons who became instrumental in reproducing their own conviction in the minds of others.

Again, our Lord summons to His aid, so to speak, the indirect testimony of ancient prophecy. He appeals, as it would seem, to the circumstances of His career as being fulfilments of Messianic prediction : He reminds His hearers that the Jewish Scriptures tell of the coming of a

Messiah who would be such as He Himself was. "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me. . . . If ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (v. 39, 46, 47).

But testimony, even of persons whose credibility it would be unreasonable to impugn, is not a reliable engenderer of positive assent. It often needs to be supplemented by some evidence of event or circumstance; this evidence, it may be, being of a kind which, if separated from testimony, would be almost useless for producing conviction. The principal circumstances and events which are presented to our notice as confirming the testimony of Jesus are the "works which none other did." "The works," says our Lord to the Jews, "which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me" (v. 36); and again, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works" (x. 37, 38). Nor is the success which these works sometimes met with in bringing conviction to the spectators left without mention. "Of the multitudes many," we are told, "believed on him; and they said, When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?" (vii. 31). "Many therefore of the Jews," we read, "which came to Mary and beheld that which he did, believed on him" (xi. 45). These works, it may be remarked, seem to be appealed to by Jesus, not as vouchers for His Divine veracity, but as being, in addition to His words, independent evidence of His Divine Nature and Mission.

We have noticed three classes of external evidence of the truth of our Lord's declarations concerning Himself.

They are direct testimony, prophecy, and the working of signs. There is another kind of evidence, which completes the tale. This is the internal or subjective evidence of intrinsic likelihood. With this, the external or objective evidence seems to have been amply sufficient to satisfy all reasonable men; without it, the external evidence went for very little. The conditions of the presence of this evidence will appear in the following section.

Intrinsic likelihood, it may be pointed out, is an *a priori* form, and the working of signs an *a posteriori* form, of circumstantial evidence. So, again, prophecy may be regarded as an *a priori* form, and testimony proper as an *a posteriori* form, of testimonial evidence. Hence the four descriptions of evidence together constitute a rational system of *a priori* and *a posteriori* evidence of testimony and circumstance.

III. We have to notice a very special kind of testimony on which our Lord lays the greatest stress, the testimony, namely, of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. No man, He seems to teach us, can be persuaded by any external or objective evidence to believe in Him, who does not, in dealing with that evidence, recognize and listen to the guiding Voice of God. And every man, He seems to teach us, who believes and becomes a member of the Church, has the Holy Spirit abiding in him as a continual Witness and Revealer of the truth. Addressing Jews who as yet did not believe in Him, Jesus says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (vi. 44, 45). And speaking to His disciples of the near future, when His

Church would be established and the Holy Spirit would be abiding in it, He says, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (xvi. 13, 14). And St. John, in his first Epistle, writes thus: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him" (v. 9, 10).

This testimony of God apparently does its chief work in enabling men to recognize in the words of Christ intrinsic likelihood of their truth.

But it is not every one who comes within sound of the gospel message, of whom it can be said that he is drawn by the Father and comes to Christ. In the same discourse, in which our Lord affirms that only through the influence of the Father can men believe in Him, He warns His hearers that this influence is not always operative and efficacious. "There are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray him. And he said, For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father" (vi. 64, 65). What, then, are we taught as to any distinction that exists between persons who are drawn, and persons who are not drawn, by the influence of the Father?

Our Lord apparently divides the Jewish people into two classes—those who are of God, or who have God for their Father; and those who are not of God, or who are the

children of the devil. And this division seems to be equivalent to a division into these two classes—persons who have faith in God, and persons who have not faith in God. If this is so, we have it clearly laid down by our Lord, that faith in God is—in the case of persons to whom was vouchsafed such evidence as His hearers had before them—the condition, and the sole condition, of their learning to believe in Him. For we read that on one occasion He spoke to a body of Jews as follows: “If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God” (viii. 42—47).

Further, if—as we safely may—we provisionally assume faith in God to include, and want of faith to include the want of, a making effort to do His Will and a looking to Him for guidance and approval, we find several passages confirming the view that faith in Christ is dependent upon faith in God. The following utterances of our Lord are to the point. “If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself” (vii. 17). “To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (xviii. 37). “How can



ye believe, which receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?" (v. 44).

Apparently, then, persons having faith in God are also persons who will be drawn by Him to accept the gospel when the external evidence of its truth is placed before them. And persons who, though professing to have some knowledge of God, are nevertheless without real faith in Him, are powerless to assent to the Christian revelation. If they are wanting in love for God, if they are careless of truth and right, the doctrines of the gospel can have for them no intelligible meaning, or no intelligible meaning the truth of which they can appreciate. There is for such persons no intrinsic likelihood of their being true. Though belief, given or withheld, is a mental act, yet, as we have seen in previous chapters, the giving it or withholding it appears to be in some measure dependent upon will and feeling. And will and feeling, in the case of one who does not endeavour to render to God acceptable service, are not in a condition to allow of belief in His revelation of Himself through His Son. Will and feeling gradually deprived, by their own irregularities, of the ability to act in accordance with God's laws appear to account sufficiently—with or without an additional supposition of impaired mental power—for the sad condition recorded as being that of some of the Jews at the termination of our Lord's ministry: "Though he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him: that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? For this cause they could not believe, for that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and he hardened their heart; lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive

with their heart, and should turn, and I should heal them " (xii. 37—40).

Before concluding, we may notice that, as we are seemingly taught by Christ that faith in God leads to faith in Himself, so we are seemingly also taught that faith in Himself leads to a fuller faith in God. "He that believeth on me," He proclaims to the people, "believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness" (xii. 44—46). His revelation of the Father leads to a deeper knowledge of the glory and the love of God, and so to a more enlightened and a firmer faith.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

I. THE results of our investigation of the meaning of faith in the writings of the Evangelists will be found of great service in helping us to understand the Epistle to the Romans. Suggesting, as they do, different significations of the term faith, they put us in the way of following and comprehending St. Paul's argument and teaching. Without some previous familiarity with the meanings attached to this word elsewhere, we should find it a difficult and a doubtful task to ascertain, both what it is that St. Paul means by faith, and in what way it is that he looks upon righteousness as connected with it. But the consideration that others of the New Testament writers plainly make mention of certain different kinds of faith leads to the supposition, in unravelling his argument, that St. Paul may not improbably do the same; and thus seems to supply a much needed key to the solution of its difficulties. For, unless we realize that in different passages he uses the term faith with certain different significations, it appears to be impossible to construct an exposition of his doctrine which shall be at the same time consistent in itself and in harmony with the general teaching of Holy Scripture.

It seems plainly to be the case, that at the root of his argument there lies the assumption, that the natural or true aim of human conduct, in whatever condition man

may be placed, is to render, according to the possibilities vouchsafed to him, a service acceptable to God. Righteousness before God, in some form or other, is the proper end and object of man's being. And the main thesis of the Epistle appears to be, that the only way of serving God acceptably, of attaining to a state of righteousness before Him, is through the spiritual surrender of the self to Divine influences. The form of service required of man may vary, and there may be corresponding variation in the manifestation of self-surrender: but the general truth remains unchanged, that self-surrender—or faith—virtually constitutes, and alone constitutes, acceptable service; that, always, righteousness is the proper end of conduct, and faith the fitting and only means. To announce, as a thesis supported by the authority of the Jewish Scriptures, that righteousness is to be regarded as existing only in connection with some kind of faith, seems to be the purpose with which St. Paul quotes from Habbakuk, at the opening of his Epistle, the words, "The righteous shall live by faith."

Apparently there are introduced to our notice, as leading each to its own proper consequence in service that is acceptable to God, three kinds of faith or self-surrender. First, we have faith in God; secondly, a faith in Christ which leads to baptism; and thirdly, a faith in Christ which belongs only to persons who have been baptized. And apparently, according to the teaching of this Epistle, the consequences are as follows. Faith in God—as that of Abraham—is counted by God for righteousness. Faith in Christ—as that of the convert to Christianity—is the means of justification or salvation. Post-baptismal faith in Christ—as that of one who is in Christ Jesus—enables the Christian to live after the spirit, and unites him very closely to the love of God.

It may be well to point out that, besides faith in God

such as that of Abraham, St. Paul seems to recognize a virtual faith in Him on the part of Gentiles who strive, according to the light vouchsafed to them, to lead a moral life.

II. Immediately before quoting the words from the prophet Habbakuk St. Paul makes the following declaration: "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith" (i. 16, 17). Evidently his chief concern in discoursing upon faith and righteousness is to exhibit and insist upon some new relation, which under the gospel dispensation has come into existence, between a faith which is a faith in Christ and a righteousness which is a righteousness of God.

He begins, however, by treating of faith in God and the relation in which it stands to righteousness. He shows, by reference to the past history of the world, that it is plainly an ordinance of God that faith in Him and righteousness before Him should live and die together. And he then urges upon those to whom he writes, that the same principle of inseparable union between faith and righteousness still holds good; that the new righteousness—the righteousness of God—which in the gospel is revealed, is a consequence of, and only attainable through the instrumentality of, the new faith—the faith in Christ—which God's final revelation of Himself through His Son has now rendered possible.

In two chief ways does St. Paul seem to appeal to the history of the past in support of the position that righteousness before God is contingent upon faith in Him. He insists, on the one hand, referring to the condition of the Gentile world, that the most shocking ungodliness and

immorality has resulted from refusal to have anything to do with faith in God. And he adduces, on the other hand, the well-known circumstances of the life of Abraham to show that in his case—which he regards as typical—righteousness before God was directly attributable to the faith which he displayed.

In regard to the ungodliness and unrighteousness which St. Paul describes as having a place in the conduct of the Gentile world, what we have to notice is the account he gives of the source whence it originated. We can scarcely be mistaken in understanding him to say, that it was consequent upon a refusal to have anything to do with faith in God. For men's faith in God must, it would seem, involve as an essential part of it, even if it may not be said to entirely consist in, a making acknowledgment in thought and word and deed of His claims upon them as their Creator and Moral Ruler. And such acknowledgment, St. Paul seems to tell us plainly, a certain portion of the Gentile world deliberately refused to render. "The invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. . . . They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. . . . And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting" (i. 20, 21, 25, 28).

Abraham, on the contrary, was conspicuous for his faith in God; and the exercise of this faith God was pleased to regard as constituting in itself acceptable service.

“ Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness ” (iv. 3). The special manifestation of his faith to which reference is here made, was his complete and unfailing confidence in the power and in the gracious purposes of God, a confidence evidently springing from a willing and submissive recognition of God as his Creator and the rightful and righteous Disposer of his life and destiny. We read of him as one “ who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. And without being weakened in faith, he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb : yea, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. Wherefore, also, it was reckoned unto him for righteousness ” (iv. 18—22).

Let us now carefully note the language in which St. Paul speaks of the relation in which the faith of Abraham stood to righteousness. “ We say, To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness ” (iv. 9). He does not, be it observed, tell us that Abraham, having faith, thereby became righteous. Nor does he tell us that Abraham, having faith, was thereby justified. Nowhere in this Epistle does it appear that the term “ justify ” is intended to be applicable to the present state of persons having only faith in God. Faith in God—such appears to be St. Paul’s teaching—is only reckoned for righteousness. It neither directly leads to righteousness, nor is the direct means or condition of justification. God, seeing in Abraham one who to the best of his ability performed the imperfect services required of him, was satisfied with

his conduct. He accepted his faith as being, in those early days of man's religious training, a sufficient substitute or equivalent for real righteousness of life. And this imputation of righteousness is shared, so far as they stand in the same need of it, by all his spiritual descendants. He is "the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them" (iv. 11).

Let us further be careful to bear in mind—for this seems necessary to a correct appreciation of St. Paul's argument—that Abraham's faith had existence before that particular manifestation of it which led to its being recorded of him in the Book of Genesis, that his faith was reckoned for righteousness. Apparently it was to him as already a man of tried faith—a faith shown, for example, in his having at God's bidding, and in dependence upon His promise of reward, left his home to sojourn in a strange land—that God made that special announcement by reason of which his faith shone so conspicuously forth. His existing faith was apparently the cause of his being chosen by God anew as the recipient of a particular promised blessing; and his faith, not only in relation to this particular promise, but in relation to God's promises in general, was reckoned to him for righteousness.

And in respect of the blessing consequent upon his faith, no less than in respect of the righteousness which was reckoned to him on account of it, Abraham is the type and representative of a line of spiritual descendants, of all succeeding persons, that is, who, like him, have faith in God. Not only is their faith reckoned for righteousness, but they together constitute the body to whom the promise is continued until it is at length fulfilled. "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed;



not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (iv. 16).

III. The position, in respect of faith and righteousness, of those particular descendants of faithful Abraham who dwell within hearing of the gospel of Jesus Christ has now to be considered. They, it seems quite clear, are regarded by St. Paul as the actual inheritors of the promised blessing. This blessing, spoken of as justification, includes but is something more than an imputed righteousness; and the faith which is the condition of its bestowal includes but is something more than the old faith in God. Thus much appears to be intimated in the following passage: "It was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification" (iv. 22—25). What, then, is justification? and what is the nature of the faith by which man is justified?

The new condition of grace, besides being termed justification, is variously spoken of in other language. Hence, by a collation of passages, we are enabled to learn what justification means. The quotation of the following three passages will serve our purpose. "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 20, 21). "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life. For the wages of sin is death: but the free gift of God is eternal life in

Christ Jesus our Lord" (vi. 22, 23). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (x. 9, 10).

Justification, we thus gather, is most intimately and closely connected with salvation, with righteousness, and with eternal life. Apparently, the free gift which 'came to justification' includes, in a manner, the gift of salvation, the gift of righteousness, and the gift of eternal life. The being justified seems to imply or presuppose the being saved from sin and from the wrath of God, to signify mainly the being endowed with the opportunity and ability to become righteous, and to involve the enjoyment of an eternal life consequent on righteousness being attained. It appears to be a true, and perhaps a sufficient account of the meaning of justification, as the term is used by St. Paul, to say that it is, the being accounted righteous and destined to eternal life by reason of being saved from sin and put in the way of becoming actually and truly righteous. Or, since eternal life is through righteousness, and salvation from sin is a necessary antecedent to the becoming righteous, justification may be defined more briefly as, the being accounted righteous by reason of being endowed with a gift of righteousness.

But let us, before we pass on, endeavour to realize clearly what is meant by this gift of righteousness. Evidently the righteousness bestowed is, in kind, the same that is spoken of at the beginning of the Epistle as a 'righteousness of God' revealed in the gospel. It is, again, the subject of the following passage: "But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe ; for there is no distinction ; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (iii. 21—24). This expression, righteousness of God, can scarcely indicate any other conduct than such as is in God's sight absolutely and truly righteous, such as is for its own sake acceptable to Him. It can scarcely mean any other than the righteousness which was exemplified in the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect and ideal conduct presented to man, under the gospel, as a pattern for him to seek to imitate, as the ultimate object and goal of his endeavour. This ideal conduct is apparently, through God's great gift of justification, put within man's reach ; God sees in him whom He justifies one who may eventually win his way to the attainment of Divine perfection. Man's being endowed with the gift of justification does not seem to mean merely that God credits him with a perfection of conduct that is not really his, and certainly it does not mean that God straightway makes him perfect. The true explanation appears to be, that God places him in, and sees him walking in, the way of gradually fashioning his behaviour after the example set by Christ and so becoming truly and wholly righteous.

What, now, is the nature of the faith—additional to the old faith in God—which is the pre-requisite of justification ? "If," we are told, "thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The new faith, then, clearly involves a mental assent to whatever doctrines of the gospel are expressed by the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead. And perhaps all these fundamental doctrines may be concisely

stated thus :—the Deity and Incarnation of Jesus Christ ; His death and resurrection and ascension into heaven for man's salvation ; and the obligation under which men lie, who would avail themselves of the benefits of His Passion, to acknowledge Him as their living Master, and follow the example of His self-surrender. We may perhaps say without much fear of error, that the faith which is the condition of man's justification consists, at least in part, in a mental assent to these fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

But is this all ? Apparently it is not. Not the mind only, but the heart, must acquiesce in the truths assented to ; and not only must assent be given, but the giving of assent must be proclaimed. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Would it, now, be unreasonable to conclude, even from the wording of this passage, that assent, in order to be efficacious, must be followed by submission to the rite of baptism ? Believing with the heart may not unnaturally be taken to mean believing in such a way that appropriate action follows upon assent ; and the first rational consequence of assent is plainly, as we elsewhere learn, the coming to be baptized. And confessing with the mouth may not unnaturally be taken to refer to the confession of belief which we have ground for supposing was required of all candidates for baptism.

But whether or not St. Paul may be rightly considered to be here enunciating the principle, that submission to Christian baptism is a necessary part of saving faith in Christ, there can scarcely be any reasonable doubt that he held this doctrine. The following passage, which comes immediately after his long exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith through the free gift of God, seems

sufficient to make this evident. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him by the likeness of his death, we shall be also by the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin" (vi. 1—7).

Before bringing this section to a close it may be pointed out, that we seem to have in the Epistle ample confirmation of the teaching of St. John's Gospel as to the conditions under which persons who hear of Christ become believers in Him. Faith in Christ, we found, is represented by St. John as given by God, and given to those, and those only, who already have faith in Him. And this distinctly appears to be the doctrine which St. Paul lays down in reference to the same subject. The question, be it observed, does not relate to the opportunity, afforded to some and not to others, of coming within sound of the gospel message; but it relates to the response, given by some and withheld by others, to the gospel when it is proclaimed. The explanation put before us by St. Paul agrees, as we shall see, with that presented by St. John.

For, first, St. Paul speaks of believers in Christ as being called by God. "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew,

he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren : and whom he foreordained, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified " (viii. 28—30). And secondly, he accounts for the unbelief, and consequent temporary rejection or exclusion, of the individual Jews who were not justified, by attributing it, as it would seem, to their want of faith in God. " Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works " (ix. 31, 32). " That which Israel seeketh for, that he obtained not : but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened : according as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this very day " (xi. 7, 8).

IV. The justifying or saving faith which we have been considering is the distinctive faith of the convert to Christianity ; though of course, so far as the nature of the case allows, it continues to be possessed by the baptized Christian. And this is the kind of faith in Christ which is put before us, especially and prominently, in the Epistle to the Romans. There appears, however, to be some mention made of another kind of faith in Christ, a faith which belongs exclusively to those who have actually been baptized. St. Paul would seem to have in mind these two kinds of Christian faith, when at the beginning of his Epistle he writes, " Therein " (that is, in the gospel) " is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith."

Apparently, too, it must be the second kind of faith in Christ—though St. Paul does not now make mention of faith by name—that constitutes, in whole or in great part, the new animating consciousness which he refers to as fashioning the conduct of the baptized Christian. In the

sixth and seventh chapters of the Epistle he insists on the obligation under which the Christian lies to enter upon a new life, now for the first time opened to him, of submission to a law of true righteousness; and in the eighth chapter he draws a picture of this new life of sanctification. And he seems to be endeavouring to excite in his Christian readers the action of an animating consciousness, which he here designates 'the spirit,' whose function it is to mould the conduct in ways of righteousness under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit now dwelling in them. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the spirit is life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you. So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (viii. 5—14).

But even in this Epistle this second kind of faith in Christ appears to be distinctly spoken of by name in reference to one of its manifestations. In the later chapters St. Paul, no longer intent upon a profound

theological discussion, addresses his readers as Christians who need advice and guidance in the conduct of their daily life. And when he speaks of their faith he seems clearly to be referring to a faith which is theirs in consequence of the special relation in which, as baptized Christians, they stand to Christ. "I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith. For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, . . . (let us use them) according to the proportion of our faith" (xii. 3—6). "Him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not to doubtful disputations. One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs. . . . I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. . . . The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (xiv. 1, 2, 14, 22, 23).

In both the passages just quoted the faith spoken of seems to be some grasp of Christian principles, or insight into the Mind of Christ, derived from a special close relation in which the Christian stands to Him as a member of His body. And this faith, being thus derived, is apparently a manifestation of that new animating consciousness, springing up in persons in whom Christ's Spirit dwells, which St. Paul, as we have seen, elsewhere treats



of under the name of spirit. There is, then, we conclude, evidence in this Epistle to the Romans that he taught the doctrine of a post-baptismal faith in Christ, causing the Christian to fashion his life after the guidance of the indwelling Spirit, and comprising an insight into the Mind of Christ.

## CHAPTER VI.

### OTHER EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.

I. WE have seen that St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans sets before us, at least implicitly, three distinct aspects or kinds of faith. How far they are the more truly described as aspects or as kinds we are not yet in a position to determine: for our present purpose it is sufficient to note the clear distinction which seems to subsist between them. We have, first, faith in God, which is an activity of consciousness common to all persons, Christian and non-Christian, by whom He is revered and served. We have, secondly, a faith in Christ, which is an activity of consciousness manifested by persons who, hearing the gospel preached, heartily accept its message and become baptized members of the Church. And we have, thirdly, a faith in Christ, which is an activity of consciousness peculiar to persons who have submitted to the rite of Christian baptism, an activity of consciousness belonging to the new personal relation in which members of the Church stand to Him who is its Head.

Now the distinction between these three aspects or kinds of faith, though perhaps in the Epistle to the Romans it is more conspicuous than elsewhere, is not by any means confined to this Epistle; it constitutes a permanent feature of St. Paul's theology. We find him in his other writings employing the one term faith to signify at

different times the three different modes of activity of consciousness that have just been mentioned. Further, in no other signification do we seem to meet with it. That is to say, when it is employed by him, as it almost invariably is, in a religious sense, always it seems to carry with it—excepting only when it is used objectively to denote the body of Christian doctrine—one or another of these three meanings.

At the same time, however, it is not always possible to determine which of the three meanings is the one intended in a given passage, or indeed to say that the term is to be understood in one sense only. As we shall presently see, there are some passages in which it is not entirely clear which of the meanings it is that best suits the context, and others in which there is reason to suppose that St. Paul may have purposely expressed himself with some degree of vagueness.

Illustrations of these two points may indeed be cited from the Epistle to the Romans. In the first and in the last chapter St. Paul speaks of his work of preaching the gospel as being ‘unto obedience of faith.’ The faith spoken of is clearly a kind of Christian faith; but it is not perhaps clear whether it is assent to the principles of the gospel, or whether it is a recognition of the personal relation in which the believer stands to Christ, that St. Paul contemplates as leading to obedience to God’s commands. It may even be the case, that this is a passage in which the term faith is meant to be understood objectively, as indicating the body of Christian principles to which obedience is to be given. Again, St. Paul, in the first chapter, thanks God that the faith of his Roman converts is ‘proclaimed throughout the whole world;’ and he longs that he and they may be comforted ‘each by the other’s faith.’ Here the meaning of the term can

scarcely, it would seem, be restricted to either one of the two kinds of faith in Christ ; if indeed it may not be taken to include, together with both of them, faith in God.

The main object, then, of the present chapter is to confirm, by reference to St. Paul's other writings, the previous argument—that by faith we are intended at different times to understand three different and specific modes of consciousness. A further object is to show, by means of examination of various passages which for one reason or another suggest themselves for consideration, that they all illustrate and are explained by one or more of the three definite significations of the term which have been pointed out. Support will thus be given to the contention, that in these three significations we have implicitly contained the whole of St. Paul's theory of religious faith.

Let us now attend to the first of the two objects mentioned, taking note of passages by means of which the distinction between the three modes of consciousness may be displayed.

(1) A very suitable passage with which to begin is found in the Epistle to the Galatians, an Epistle whose argument, in its vindication of the sole efficacy of faith to stand for or to lead to righteousness, closely resembles that of the Epistle to the Romans. St. Paul writes as follows : "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Know therefore that they which be of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham" (Gal. iii. 6—9). Here what we have specially to note is, that Abraham is spoken of as having faith

And, apparently, by this faith we cannot properly understand anything but faith in God, a faith manifesting itself in a firm conviction that God's gracious promise of hereafter blessing the world in him and his posterity would have its due fulfilment. There seems to be no sound reason whatever for reading into the statement—that his faith was reckoned for righteousness—any implication that the faith in question was, in some obscure and indeterminate fashion, equivalent to the Christian convert's justifying faith in Christ. The manifestation of Abraham's faith appears to have had for its object the simple fact of God's fulfilment of His gracious promise, and not at all the very special manner in which, or the very special means by which, that promise would hereafter be fulfilled. To make this position the more clear, it may be pointed out that, in the same chapter from which the passage just quoted has been taken, we seem to find faith in Christ distinctly spoken of as a new thing, coming into existence in the world concurrently with the abolition of the law. "Before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal iii. 23—25). There is, then, we conclude, clear mention in the Epistle of a faith which is a faith in God, and not a faith in Christ.

(2) We may next proceed to consider passages, in addition to that just quoted, in which justifying or saving faith is the faith spoken of, the faith in Christ which not only is reckoned to man for righteousness, but is a means or instrument of his being placed by God in the way of actually becoming righteous. This faith we have seen to consist in assent to the doctrines and principles of the

gospel, assent being understood to include submission to the rite of baptism.

That elsewhere than in the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul speaks of a faith in Christ, of which the essential characteristic is that it is a justifying faith, is evident from these words: "We believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. ii. 16). That this justifying or saving faith results from the gospel being preached, and so consists in some sort of assent to the doctrines and principles which it proclaims, appears from the following passages: "It was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching [to save them that believe]" (1 Cor. i. 21); "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. . . . If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 14, 17). That the assent which faith gives to the gospel includes submission to the rite of baptism, we seem to learn from this passage: "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he quicken together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses" (Col. ii. 12, 13). That the Christian convert is placed on quite a new elevation of moral life, the following passage seems to show: "Lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. iii. 9, 10). And that justifying or saving faith leads, through baptism, to a very close relation between the believer and his Lord, entirely different from anything that has gone before, and

likely to give rise to a peculiar consciousness of attachment to Him, we may gather from words immediately succeeding some lately quoted: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26—28).

(3) We have now to notice that there are passages in which faith in Christ seems to signify something quite different from what we have thus far seen to be its meaning, and to denote a new consciousness of the kind just alluded to. This faith appears to consist, not in a confession of assent to His teaching and His commands, but in some sort of hold upon His spiritual and living presence. Such passages are the following:—"I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 20): "Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. iii. 8—11). The being actuated by the faith here spoken of seems to be equivalent to the 'walking after the spirit' depicted in the Epistle to the Romans.

II. We have had under observation passages which

seem plainly to point together to three different aspects or kinds of faith, not to be confounded the one with the other. Having clear apprehension of the distinction between them in St. Paul's system of theology, we may now allow ourselves to recognize the fact, that he often writes from a point of view rendering the distinction, or some part of it, unimportant. That is to say, there are uses of the term faith which, in interpreting them, it is impossible to limit to any one of the three significations. There are passages in which one of the three definite meanings will suit the context almost as well as another, and in which it may well be that two or more are intended to have expression at the same time in the one term. And there are passages in which the signification seems to be, not so much any definite activity of consciousness, as a general condition from which more than one kind of activity might proceed. In the one case St. Paul seems as if he might be regarding two or more definite aspects or kinds of faith as operating concurrently in the consciousness of the believer, and being more or less dependent the one upon the other. In the other case he appears to be speaking with some intentional vagueness, having in mind that which is common to the different manifestations of faith, rather than that in respect of which they are distinguished from one another.

The words now about to be quoted are, apparently, instances of the former kind of use. "From you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth ; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you ; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the



dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. i. 8—10). "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. i. 13, 14). In the former of these passages we seem to have plainly set before us, under the one term faith, both faith in God, and the assent to the doctrines of the gospel which, in the case of devout persons who have heard them preached, is its natural consequence. And in the latter we seem to have the thought of the faith which consists in assent to revealed truth in close association with the thought of the faith which is an animating consciousness of one in whom Christ's Spirit dwells.

The other kind of ambiguous use seems to be exemplified in these words: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness . . . to Titus, my true child after a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour" (Tit. i. 1, 4). The 'faith of God's elect,' and the 'common faith,' here spoken of seems as if it might be applicable indifferently to confession of adhesion to the doctrines of the gospel, and to attachment to Christ as a living Saviour, if not also to a conscious rendering of service to God the Father. Similarly, two if not three kinds of faith seem to be vaguely covered by the one term in the following passage: "Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my

remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy ; having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee ; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice ; and, I am persuaded, in thee also " (2 Tim. i. 1—5).

III. The second object of this chapter is to show, by means of examination of leading texts—texts which for one reason or another seem calculated, more than others, to engage the attention of a reader of St. Paul's Epistles—that there is no need to travel beyond the three meanings of faith which are now familiar to us in search of further explication. If it appears that in every case in which they are tested these meanings are able, among them, to supply a reasonable interpretation, it will be sufficiently manifest that we are virtually in possession of the whole of St. Paul's theory of subjective faith. It will be convenient to consider the selected texts nearly in the order in which they occur in the New Testament.

(1) " Not that we have lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy : for by faith ye stand " (2 Cor. i. 24). The faith which St. Paul here has in mind appears to be that Christian faith which consists in the maintenance by the believer of a close personal relation between himself and Jesus Christ. This, perhaps, is indicated by words which almost immediately precede the text : " Now he that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God ; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." He seems to be telling the Corinthians that he disclaims any control over or interference with this faith, being anxious only to help it forward. It is a personal matter between themselves and their living Lord, and as such is duly estimated and recompensed by Him.

But we may notice that, when the words, 'Thou standest by thy faith,' occur in the Epistle to the Romans (xi. 20), the interpretation of them is a different one. There a contrast is being drawn between the position of the Jews who had declined to receive the gospel offered to them by God, and that of persons who had accepted the call to become Christians. "By their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by thy faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee." The faith spoken of cannot, apparently, be post-baptismal faith in Christ; but it may be taken to be, either faith in God, manifesting itself in accepting Christianity in accordance with His Will, or faith in Christ, consisting in assent to the message of the gospel. Or perhaps this is a passage in which two aspects of faith are in St. Paul's mind at the same time.

(2) "Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 6—8). There is an interpretation of the words, 'We walk by faith, not by sight' (or, as the margin gives it, appearance), which seems to make them explanatory of the second half, rather than of the first, of the foregoing passage; associating them, that is, with absence from the body, rather than with absence from the Lord. This interpretation seems desirous of exhibiting a moral contrast between the habit of natural vision and the habit of spiritual vision, between having regard to the things 'which are seen and are temporal' and having regard to the things 'which are not seen and are eternal.' And it seems to imply that spiritual, and not natural, vision is that which it is fitting for the Christian, even now,

chiefly to make exercise of ; so that to wish to be at home with the Lord, rather than in the body, is no more than a proper and consistent aspiration.

If this interpretation were correct, faith, used here to signify the vision of things pertaining to the risen Lord, would seem (as we saw at the close of the preceding chapter) to be a manifestation or exercise of that post-baptismal faith in Christ which results from the entirely new relation that springs up between a Christian believer and his Lord.

The interpretation, however, does not appear to be correct. Regarded grammatically, the words, 'We walk by faith, not by sight,' seem plainly to be explanatory of the saying, 'Whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.' And they appear to mean, not that we ought daily to be looking upon spiritual and eternal things, but that in our present condition there are certain eternal things which even with our spiritual vision we are unable to behold ; apprehending them only by the exercise of faith. The term, apparently, is used here, as frequently elsewhere, to signify inferential assent to the doctrines of the gospel. Faith is presented, not as equivalent to, but as something other than, spiritual vision. It is, not the actual looking upon spiritual things, but the being possessed of inferential assurance of them.

(3) "Try your own selves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves" (2 Cor. xiii. 5). On a first reading of these words we might, from the sound of them, be inclined to regard the passage as one of those in which the term faith is used objectively, to denote the body of Christian principles which was accepted by all true believers. And we might suppose that St. Paul, in answering a demand for some proof that Christ is speaking in him, is exhorting the Corinthians to make sure of their

own orthodoxy, of their own assent to the actual doctrines which they profess. We might suppose, that is, that the question being, on the one side, as to the truth of his utterances, was, on the other side, as to the truth of their beliefs. But on taking the passage in connection with the words that immediately follow—"Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be reprobate"—we may, perhaps, rather look upon it as written by St. Paul less in reference to Christian doctrine than in reference to the proper source of his and their words and actions. He was conscious that Jesus Christ was in him, speaking through him; and they too, if they were living as they should live, would be able to find, on self-examination, a consciousness within them of Christ's presence. Faith, then, in the passage before us would seem to be that post-baptismal subjective faith in Christ, which consists in some sort of very close attachment to Him.

(4) "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. . . . And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 4—6, 11—13). There is, perhaps, at first sight, a somewhat strong presumption in favour of the view, that the faith twice mentioned in the foregoing passage is the faith which is exclusively Christian, belonging only to persons who are already members of the Christian Church. For, in the first place, it seems clearly

to be this post-baptismal faith that St. Paul has in mind when, a very little earlier in the Epistle, he writes thus:—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (iii. 17—19). And in the second place, there can be no doubt that in the passage before us he is depicting something of the Church's life in Christ. But a closer examination seems to show, that it is far more likely that his mention of faith really has reference to belief in the doctrines and principles of the gospel. He is urging his readers to the manifestation of Christian unity and concord, to the attainment of a corporate life animated by the one Spirit of God. And his argument seems to be, first, that relatively to profession of belief in the principles of the gospel the mode of entrance into the Church had been one and the same for all; and secondly, that the growing up, under the guidance of Christ's ministers, into a full and consentient apprehension of these same principles was an essential purpose of the training to which God was subjecting the infant Church.

Concluding, then, that St. Paul, in speaking of faith, is thinking of the accepted truths which are revealed in the gospel, we have further to consider, whether he uses the term objectively, to denote the system of doctrine itself, or subjectively, to denote the mental assent which is given to it. And on the whole it seems clear, that in the latter use is to be found the correct interpretation. The words 'one faith' might perhaps be taken to mean, that the body of doctrine presented to converts for their assent was the same for all, no less reasonably than they may be taken

to mean, that their mental attitude towards it, the feeling of assent to it required of them, was the same for all. But with the words 'the unity of the faith' the case appears to be different. For, first, the unity desired by St. Paul, and represented by him as a grand end of the Church's discipline, seems certainly to be a unity of consciousness. And secondly, faith appears to be coupled here with knowledge, just as elsewhere we find believing in and knowing Christ spoken of together. St. Peter, for example, is reported as saying to Jesus, "We have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God" (John vi. 69); and St. John writes, "We know and have believed the love which God hath in us" (1 John iv. 16). And so, when in the passage under consideration we read of 'the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God,' the coupling of faith and knowledge seems in itself to indicate that the faith spoken of is likely to be that subjective faith which consists in assent to the doctrines of the gospel.

If the above view is correct, then for the words, "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God," there might be substituted, as the translation of the Greek, "the unity of faith in, and knowledge of, the Son of God."

(5) "Withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one" (Eph. vi. 16). Faith seems to be represented here as a defensive armour rendering innocuous and futile all temptations addressed to the ordinary motives of human nature, to the springs of conduct, that is, which do not enter into the composition of faith itself. The power to take up at any time and grasp the shield is assumed. It is not any attack made upon the soldier for the purpose of depriving him of his defence that St. Paul has in mind,

but attacks made upon him such as, by making use of the shield of faith, it is always possible for him to render vain. Such a defensive faith we seem to have, and to have only, in that adhesion to Jesus Christ which causes the believer to have constant regard to things eternal, which enables him to look upon his life as already hid with Christ in God. For what power can there be in the incitements of the evil one to seize upon forbidden pleasures or shrink from the endurance of appointed pains, what power can there be in them to seriously disturb the calm steadfastness of the Christian warrior whose mind, in close sympathy with the Mind of Christ, is set on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth? Him the vulgar assaults of the enemy are powerless to hurt; the intimacy of his relation to Christ being, against them, an impenetrable shield. Temptations by which many another would be laid low he scarcely feels; he remains standing among them scathless and unharmed.

(6) We may now notice, though a little out of their proper order, three texts allied to this last by the circumstance that in them also mention is made of faith in connection with Christian warfare. St. Paul says of himself, when approaching the end of life, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. iv. 7). Here faith, although associated with the good fight, does not appear to be intended to carry with it the same meaning as in the former passage. It seems most probable, especially when we pay attention to the context, that it is, not any kind of subjective faith, but the body of Christian doctrine, which he claims to have kept throughout the conflict. He is charging Timothy to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all



long-suffering and teaching"; and so it would seem to be the case, that it is on behalf of doctrine that he is conscious of having himself fought the good fight, and that it is doctrine of which he speaks when he declares that he has kept the faith. This passage, then—noticed on account of its verbal similarity to others—appears to illustrate the objective use, not any one of the three subjective uses, of the term faith.

(7) In another place St. Paul, in writing to Timothy, exhorts him to "fight the good fight of the faith"; or, as the Greek might be otherwise rendered, "the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. vi. 12). It seems to be a little uncertain here which is the more correct translation, and whether by faith we are to understand the objective faith on behalf of which the fight is to be fought, or a subjective faith in the strength of which the conflict is to be carried on. On the one hand, bearing in mind his picture of the Christian soldier, we might not unnaturally suppose that St. Paul, in the passage before us, is thinking of a warfare waged in the strength of a firm subjective faith by which the believer in Christ is freed from the power of earthly distractions. But on the other hand, if we refer to the passage last considered, we see that there is some similar ground of analogy for thinking that the term faith is here used objectively, to signify the body of Christian doctrine which the believer is called upon to do his best to defend. Either interpretation seems suitable to the context; but the latter has the advantage of conforming with the general, though not invariable, usage of the New Testament writers, whereby the presence or absence of the Greek article marks the distinction between objective and subjective faith. We may conclude, perhaps, on the whole that there is no sufficient

reason for decidedly maintaining that one is preferable to the other.

(8) "This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare ; holding faith and a good conscience ; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith " (1 Tim. i. 18, 19). Once more we have the idea of Christian warfare in some conjunction with the idea of faith. We have noticed a passage in which the correct interpretation of faith appears to be, that it consists in a relation to Christ such that the believer lives in and with Him ; another in which faith is used to denote the body of Christian doctrine ; and a third in which it is uncertain which of these two meanings should be attached to the term. In the passage now before us we seem to have faith used in its one remaining Christian sense, to signify assent to the doctrines of the gospel. The charge committed to Timothy, which he was to make the object of a good warfare, appears to be connected with the preaching of the gospel. And the faith which, together with a good conscience, he is bidden to hold would seem to be a subjective faith consisting in his own unfeigned assent to the gospel which he preached. The fact of faith being coupled with conscience seems to point clearly to a subjective faith ; and the fact of St. Paul's charge being concerned with doctrine seems to indicate that particular subjective faith which consists in giving a real assent to Christian principles.

The use of the term at the close of the passage is less manifest. For it seems possible, either to render the Greek, "made shipwreck concerning their faith," understanding faith in the same sense as before ; or to render it as the Revisers have done, and to consider that it is

objective faith, or Christian doctrine, of which St. Paul is speaking. But whichever interpretation we prefer, the meaning of the sentence is very much the same.

This passage, it may be noticed, appears to confirm what we have seen to be a special point in the teaching of St. John's Gospel, viz., that real mental assent to Christian doctrine is dependent upon the will not refusing obedience to God's commands.

(9) "We sent Timothy, our brother and God's minister in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith; that no man be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that hereunto we are appointed. For verily, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labour should be in vain" (1 Thess. iii. 2—5). We have had before us the case of the Christian soldier assaulted by the powers of evil, and rendered proof against a mass of temptations, which must include temptations connected with his sense of pain, by the complete protection afforded him by one kind of faith in Christ. We are now called upon to consider the case of struggling Christians, seemingly less perfectly equipped, to whom pain occasions very real distress, and consequent temptation to renounce their faith. What, then, is this faith which pain, instead of affording opportunity for its triumphant exercise, sorely tempts them to renounce? Apparently it is their Christian profession, the faith in Christ which consists in unfeigned and declared assent to gospel principles.

The afflictions to which St. Paul alludes as having befallen the Thessalonians were afflictions that came

upon them, not as men, but as Christians; they were persecutions which were consequent upon their steadfast adherence to the new religion. And the question was, How would they regard them? Would they acquiesce in the endurance of suffering for Christ's sake, acknowledging it to be no more than an appointed part of the religion which they professed? If so, their assent to the principles of the gospel, principles covering the acceptance of pain as well as joy, would show itself to be genuine and strong assent. Or would they abate the ardour of their profession in their desire to avoid exciting the hostility of those around them? Would they tell themselves that they were not called by God to believe in Christianity to such an extent as to destroy their present happiness?

When the following Christ in suffering is once thoroughly apprehended and accepted by believers as an essential part of true religion, persecutions have little power to shake that faith which constitutes their profession. For they are then living in the strength of that other faith in Christ which enables them to face calamity with untroubled mind. But in the earlier stages of the Christian course there would seem to be frequent danger lest the believer should, under stress of persecution, fail to keep his belief in Christianity unimpaired. There is danger, either that he may have learned but imperfectly the lesson of the Cross, and so may renounce as superfluous that part of his belief which is manifestly the occasion of his suffering pain; or else that, his knowledge being coupled with a shrinking fear, he may deliberately determine to disavow some portion of the profession of a Christian.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE RELATION OF FAITH TO LOVE AND HOPE.

I. IT remains for us to consider in this supplementary chapter the relation in which, in St. Paul's system of theology, faith stands to love and hope. The general question seems in a measure forced upon us by the frequent, prominent, and varied mention of one or both of these two activities in some sort of conjunction with faith. Let us begin with the relation between faith and love, taking note of passages which seem to give diverse presentations of it.

At the close of the familiar thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians we have a declaration that faith is inferior to Christian love: "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love." In the Epistles to the Galatians and to the Ephesians we find faith depicted as making itself manifest through love: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love" (Gal. v. 6); "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong . . . to know the love of Christ" (Eph. iii. 17, 19). In the first Epistle to Timothy faith seems to be presented as one of several sources of love: "The end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned" (i. 5). And in not a few places we find

faith coupled with love in a manner which seems to indicate that the two are distinct and co-ordinate elements in the Christian character. Of this the following passages may be given as examples: "We are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth" (2 Thess. i. 3); "Speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine: that aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, sound in faith, in love, in patience" (Tit. ii. 1, 2).

Whatever inconsistencies there may seem to be in these references to a relation existing between faith and love, it is tolerably obvious, in the light of our previous investigations, that they are likely to have their explanation in certain different senses in which the term faith is used. Let us, then, consider if in fact they may thus be satisfactorily accounted for.

Earlier in the chapter descriptive of Christian love St. Paul writes thus: "If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." And in the chapter immediately preceding we find these words: "To one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit." Within the compass of these two passages we have, it may be, the idea of faith which explains St. Paul's declaration that faith is inferior to Christian love.

Faith, ranking in some sort with wisdom and knowledge and power of healing, as a special gift of the Holy Spirit, can scarcely be the faith by which the believer, having become a Christian, attaches himself to Christ. Nor, apparently, can it be anything—such as familiarity

with Christian principles derived from sympathetic insight into the Mind of Christ—proceeding naturally, so to speak, from this infinitely important post-baptismal faith. This kind of faith in Christ we may altogether set aside. The faith in question may, however, not improbably be some manifestation or development of that other kind of faith in Christ, which consists in assent to Christian doctrine. We may, perhaps, rightly suppose that St. Paul has in mind an eminently clear and full apprehension of, combined with a firm and unwavering assent to, the revealed truths of the gospel.

But this idea, if it can be made use of to explain the inferiority of faith to love, appears to require first some modification. For St. Paul, in introducing the hypothesis of an unloving person having faith so as to remove mountains, may be thought to be making allusion to the faith of which our Lord speaks, when He says, "Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea ; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass, he shall have it" (Mark xi. 23). And this faith appears to be a faith in God, consisting in the believer's realization of his position as one called to labour in God's service and dependently upon His aid. Thus it is, perhaps, faith in God that is the chief idea in the faith that St. Paul subsequently compares with love.

The idea of faith in God we may, apparently, enlarge in either one of two directions. We may, confining our attention to the one chapter, not unreasonably hold that St. Paul is thinking of faith in God as manifested by one who is intent on doing great things in His service. Or we may, bearing in mind the previous mention of faith, prefer to consider that what is meant is rather a faith

specially given by the Spirit, and consisting in an unusual grasp of Christian principles—looking upon this as a manifestation of faith in God. For assent to Christian principles, regarded in its origin—as proceeding, that is, from a faith in God which assents to whatever He may be pleased to reveal—may be as truly designated faith in God, as otherwise it is fitly spoken of as faith in Christ.

We conclude, then, that the faith which St. Paul pronounces to be inferior to Christian love may certainly be taken to be faith in God, though which of two manifestations of it is more particularly meant is perhaps uncertain.

But why, we may go on to ask, is faith in God inferior to Christian love? There are certain words of our Lord, recorded by St. Matthew, which seem to supply, at least in part, an answer to this question. “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (xi, 11). The Christian, apparently, is one in whom are implanted the germs of a new and perfect life, exalting him in the scale of being above all others of the sons of men. And, apparently, any grace of character that is distinctively and exclusively a Christian grace is constituted, by that fact alone, superior to any that is shared by persons who are not Christians. Now the love which forms the subject of Christ’s new commandment, and which is dwelt upon by St. Paul in the chapter now before us, is essentially such a grace. It is a love which far transcends the love enjoined by the Jewish rule to love one’s neighbour as oneself. The circumstance, then, that Christian love—involving, as it does, the sacrifice of individual and independent will—belongs exclusively and distinctively to a higher state of being than that which is necessary for the possession of faith in God, may explain, at all events in part, St. Paul’s



declaration that the love depicted by him is greater than even faith.

Perhaps, however, an additional reason may be adduced. For love, we know, expresses more nearly than any other quality the nature of the Divine Being. And thus, for men to love with the self-sacrificing love of Christ is, more than in any other way, to resemble God. While faith in God constitutes the believer God's devoted servant, love to the brethren assimilates him to God. And to have attained to the likeness of sonship is to be in the enjoyment of a higher state of existence than that implied by faithfulness of service.

II. We pass on to the consideration of faith making itself manifest through love. The faith spoken of in the second and third of the passages quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the faith which, in the case of those who are in Christ Jesus, works through love, the faith by reason of which Christ dwells in the heart, so that the believer becomes rooted and grounded in love, this faith can assuredly be none other than that post-baptismal faith which attaches the believer to his Lord. This faith, laying hold of Christ, and making, in some dim fashion, the life of the believer an expression of the life of Christ, necessarily manifests itself in that which is the essence of His Character, viz., the practice of self-sacrificing love. There is, then, we see, no discrepancy between St. Paul's statement in one place, that love is greater than faith, and his teaching gathered from other passages, that faith produces and works through love.

III. When, in the fourth of the passages quoted, St. Paul says that "the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned," he seems to be setting before us a view, of love as a grace the cultivation of which is a moral duty, and of faith as a mode

of consciousness which would lead to this cultivation. Faith, here classed with a pure heart and a good conscience as a source of the love which Christian principles demand, is, apparently, to be understood as an assent to these principles. Love seems to be regarded, not as something which exhibits itself necessarily and inevitably in the character of the believer in so far as he has faith in Christ, but as something which needs the aid of faith in order that it may be deliberately cherished. And the faith in Christ which, consisting in assent, accepts the principle that His commands must be obeyed and His example followed, is evidently a consciousness which operates, in the manner required, as a source of love. It is not, as the other kind of faith in Christ is or would be, in itself a sufficient source ; but it is one of several sources. Here, then, the view of the relation between faith and love that is presented to us is not inconsistent with either of the two views already noticed, since the term faith has a different interpretation.

The faith which is put before us, as in the two remaining passages, as more or less co-ordinate with Christian love, likewise appears to be justifying faith, a faith which, after baptism, consists in sustained assent to Christian principles. Assent, no less than love, may be regarded as a grace of character which needs, or is in process of, cultivation and development. From one point of view it is a source of love ; from another point of view it is, like love, a growth which calls for the most watchful and attentive care.

IV. We have now, in conclusion, to consider the relation in which faith stands to hope. The term hope is apparently used by St. Paul to signify, in general, a firm and joyful expectation, grounded upon the promises of God, of future blessedness. This blessedness, in the case of members of the Christian Church, is associated in their

minds with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, and regarded by them as their new inheritance in the world to come. The immediate manifestation of their hope is a sense of joy :—" Let us rejoice in hope of the glory of God " (Rom. v. 2). And a secondary effect of it is the patient endurance of present suffering :—" Your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ " (1 Thess. i. 3).

Now this firm and joyful expectation, which evidently is nearly allied to faith, appears capable of being regarded, either as something which is distinct from, or as something which is a part of, faith—of faith, that is, in God, or of justifying faith in Christ. It is faith seen in one particular aspect, a particular aspect in which it gives rise to and is accompanied by present joy. The believer in God's revelation of His love, realizing it as a certain and indubitable fact that His promises will hereafter be fulfilled, is able to count already as his own, and in a manner to enter into present possession of, his sure inheritance in the world to come. Assent thus exercised, and accompanied by joy, is equivalent to hope. " Now the God of hope," writes St. Paul, " fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost " (Rom. xv. 13). Hope, then, appears to be a combination of assent to a certain part of God's revelation and the gladness consequent upon such assent being given. If we pay attention more particularly to the gladness which enters into it, we seem to have ground for making distinction between it and faith, since other manifestations of faith are without the gladness. If, however, we look upon it chiefly as an exercise of assent, it appears to be properly reckoned as a mode of faith. And thus St. Paul seems at one time to distinguish hope from faith, as when in passages already quoted he mentions together faith and

hope and love ; and at another time to include it, as we may go on to see, in the general idea of faith, whether of faith in God or of justifying faith in Christ.

He seems to reckon it as a part of faith in God, when he writes of Abraham—"Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb : yea, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. iv. 18—21).

And he seems to look upon it as an almost essential part of justifying faith in Christ, when he writes, "By hope were we saved" (Rom. viii. 24). Faith, meaning—as with St. Paul it evidently does mean—not a bare intellectual assent to revealed truth, but assent followed by appropriate action, may be understood as including whatever motives to such action are naturally excited, no less than it may be held to include any sense of gladness occasioned by the performance of the action. Now a disposition to take the practical step of embracing Christianity on account of the glorious provision it makes for the final happiness of the believer is likely to be a normal operating motive with those who resolve to become members of the Church. For in view of the moral disabilities imposed upon Christians in respect of making their own happiness the end of conduct, and in view of the painful oppositions they encounter from the world by reason of their profession, few would venture, indeed few would have it in their power, to determine to enter the fold of Christ, if they

were not assured by God that their happiness on the whole would, somehow, not be diminished. An operating disposition to obtain the compensating, and more than compensating, happiness promised by God—a disposition which may be said to constitute hope in that earlier stage of it in which the believer has not yet appropriated surely to himself this happiness—would seem, in all ordinary cases, to be an essential factor in conversion. It would seem to be required, in order to overcome man's natural and proper repugnance to doing anything which will evidently, so far as he can judge, mar his happiness in the present life. Apart from the special intervention of God's Holy Spirit, no man, apparently, who is not yet a Christian, can, if he acts reasonably and sanely, make a determination of the will to overthrow his own happiness. And thus, since in the majority of cases there is a prospect to the believer of some loss of the temporal happiness which he understands, a confident desire of promised reward in a future life becomes for the most part essential to the acceptance of Christianity. In this way, apparently, St. Paul's declaration, "By hope were we saved," may be sufficiently explained. He is regarding hope in its early and incipient stage, when it is a trustful disposition to obtain, rather than glad confidence in obtaining, place among the inheritors of eternal life. And he sees in it a constituent part, if not an essential part, of the faith which led the Roman Christians and himself to make confession of their acceptance of the gospel revelation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

I. ALONE among New Testament writers the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews supplies his readers with a succinct definition or description of what he means by faith. "Faith," he tells us, "is the assurance of (or the giving substance to) things hoped for, the proving (or test) of things not seen" (xi. 1). This brief statement he proceeds immediately to unfold. For hortatory purposes he shows, by means of ample illustration, how such a faith as he has in mind, a faith realizing joyfully and reverently the future and the unseen, was the animating principle of conduct in those persons of old time whom God had enabled to live the most saintly and heroic lives. Let us make use of the manifestations of faith which in this and other parts of the Epistle are put before us, in order to ascertain, for philosophic purposes, the exact nature of the things future and unseen which the author speaks of. What are the things hoped for, from which the believer derives some present satisfaction and encouragement? What are the things which, hidden from his view, exert nevertheless, through his apprehension of them, a highly important influence upon his life and conduct?

Earlier in the book we read as follows: "Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak: for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye

shewed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister. And we desire that each one of you may shew the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end: that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, since he could swear by none greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (vi. 9—15); and, "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water: let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised: and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. . . . But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; partly, being made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers with them that were so used. For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye yourselves have a better possession and an abiding one. . . . We are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul" (x. 22—24, 32—34, 39).

In the foregoing passages the idea of faith is presented to us in close association with three other ideas, those, namely, of zeal in serving God, of assured hope, and of patient endurance. And we thus seem to gather from them an explanatory view of what the writer has in mind when he speaks of faith—faith being regarded by him as the condition of salvation. What God looks for in those upon whom He bestows salvation and reward is, apparently,

zeal in His service, combined with a hope which stimulates to effort and with a patient endurance of present trouble. Hope, it may be observed, appears to be more especially put before us as having for its function the encouragement of zeal. The blessings which it has in prospect are blessings which are contingent upon a life of difficult and willing service. Hence faith, the equivalent of a combination of zeal and hope and patience, is not exactly a diligent serving of God, together with a firm expectation of general future happiness and a consequent acquiescence in all present ills ; but, rather, it is a diligent serving of God accompanied and supported by a firm expectation that the particular toil and suffering involved in and occasioned by such service will hereafter, according to His promise, meet with its own abundant compensation. It may be described as, zealous service in expectation of promised compensation and reward, or, expectation of receiving in the distant future the compensation and reward promised for zealous service.

Comparing this view of faith with the writer's description of faith already quoted, we see at once, that the things which he speaks of as hoped for are likely to be future blessings promised by God to those who actively endeavour to do His Will. And, assuming an entire practical identity between the two accounts of faith, we may further conclude, that the things not seen are truths connected with the obligation under which man lies to render unto God devoted service. Faith, the assurance of things hoped for and the proving of things not seen would seem to be an animating consciousness which leads men, first to apprehend God's revelation of Himself as the Creator and the beneficent Moral Ruler of mankind, and then to make a natural response to this revelation by serving Him as One to whom reverent obedience is no



more than due, and yet as One who will in His own good time abundantly recompense and reward all those who do Him honour. It is a disposition to serve an all-wise and loving Creator, a disposition blindly and gladly to follow His guidance in spite of present difficulty and distress, acknowledging unconditionally the claim which He has upon men's highest efforts, and yet taking encouragement from His assurance that such acknowledgment will eventually be blessed by Him.

This explanation of what the author means by faith seems to be abundantly confirmed by his subsequent discourse, in which he makes mention of a long series of examples of action taken under the influence of faith, indicating here and there the specific character of its manifestation. Let us take the two parts of the idea separately, and notice passages in which either is set forth with some plainness. We may consider faith, first, in its aspect of loyal service to God as man's Creator and Moral Ruler; and secondly, in its aspect of expectation of future recompense for such service.

That faith consists, in part, of recognition of God as Creator and Moral Ruler, seems to be declared or implied in the following verses: "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear. . . . Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (xi. 3, 6). And that such recognition involves obedient service, the following illustrations seem to show: "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to be evil entreated with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. . . . By faith

he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king : for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. . . . By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace" (xi. 24, 25, 27, 31).

And that faith further consists, in part, of assurance of receiving from God in His own good time compensation for all present trial and deprivation, appears from what is said in reference to the motives which influenced Abraham and Moses in their acts of obedience: "By faith Abraham became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise : for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God. . . . Moses accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt : for he looked unto the recompense of reward" (xi. 9, 10, 26).

II. The author of this Epistle is addressing his exhortations to Jewish Christians ; and them, in the midst of persecutions and other difficulties with which they were surrounded, he is encouraging to do good works, to be patient, and to hope, after the eminent example of acknowledged heroes of Jewish history. He is seeking to arouse to more active exercise a faith precisely the same in kind as that which had animated the illustrious persons who had gone before them. And yet, inasmuch as his readers were Christians, there was, in a certain sense, a difference in the faith of the two sets of persons. For there was a difference in the nature of the service required of them by God, and there was a difference also in the nature of their hope. Christian converts must give evidence of their profession by 'ministering unto the saints' and 'considering one another to provoke unto love,'

and also by entertaining a 'hope entering into that which is within the veil, whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for them.' And further, they must be persons who had submitted, in baptism, to have 'their bodies washed with pure water.' Faith in God, thus modified and developed by apprehension of the life and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, may be fitly spoken of as a faith in Christ. And evidently it is a faith which the writer regards as a saving faith. "We are not," he says, "of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul."

Apparently, then, we may say that the author recognizes and makes reference to a saving faith in Christ, which is based upon, or is a manifestation of, faith in God, and which consists in a practical assent to certain doctrines of the gospel. But nowhere does he seem to speak of any other kind of faith in Christ.

There is, however, one passage in which at first sight it may easily appear, that the faith which attaches the believer to his Lord is the faith to which allusion is being made. This passage, therefore, it may be well to consider for a moment before concluding. The words are these; "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (xii. 1, 2). Apparently it is really the case, that Jesus is presented here, not in any sense as the object of our faith, but only as being otherwise its helper. He is presented as ineffably the greatest of the cloud of witnesses, whose example is an encouragement to us to

endeavour to serve God in the same spirit of glad obedience in which they have served Him. Jesus is here held up to the Hebrew Christians as their great Exemplar in respect of faith in God. He is the Person whose own pre-eminent and perfect faith was ground for regarding Him as their proper Leader in the painful struggle in which they were engaged.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ST. JAMES AND ST. PETER.

I. TWO writers only, St. James and St. Peter, remain to be considered; for in St. Jude's short Epistle there is but one allusion to subjective faith, not requiring comment.

In the Epistle of St. James we find mention made of two kinds of faith: they are faith in God, and a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

In the first place, it is clearly faith in God of which the apostle speaks, when he says, "If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting" (i. 5, 6). So also is it faith in God that he has before him, when he makes reference to Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac: "Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (ii. 22, 23). The aspect in which faith in God is thus presented by the apostle to his Christian readers is twofold. First, it is that of confidence—based no doubt chiefly upon assent to the teaching of Jesus Christ—in the power and willingness of God to answer prayer; together with assurance—derived from apprehension of God as our Moral Ideal—that wisdom is a gift which He would have us seek after.

Secondly, it appears to be that of unhesitating obedience to God's commands, coupled with a firm conviction of the ultimate fulfilment of His promises.

In the second place, it would seem to be a faith in Christ, consisting in adhesion to the general doctrines of the gospel, that St. James has in mind, when he writes, "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons" (ii. 1). And in all likelihood it is also this faith which is spoken of in the words, "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations ; knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience" (i. 2).

We may notice a slight difficulty in connection with the mention of faith in the passage relating to the miraculous healing of the sick : "Is any among you sick ? let him call for the elders of the church ; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord ; and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up ; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him" (v. 14, 15). Here it seems to be uncertain which of the two foregoing kinds of faith it is that the apostle has in mind. On the one hand, comparing this mention of faith with the passage in which men are exhorted to ask God for wisdom and are cautioned to ask in faith, and comparing it, further, with what the Gospels record concerning Christ's teaching on the subject of faith and prayer, we might conclude that it is God the Father who may be expected to respond to the confident entreaties of His servants working in His name. On the other hand, comparing it with the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles of the healing of the lame man by Peter and John, we might not unreasonably suppose that it is Jesus Christ in whose name the anointing is to be done, and that it is in a spirit of faith in Him

that prayer is to be made ; the question, whether by the Lord who answers prayer is intended God the Father or Jesus Christ, still remaining open.

Allusion is perhaps made to the post-baptismal faith of attachment to Christ in the words, "Hearken, my beloved brethren ; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him ?" (ii. 5).

II. St. James, apparently accepting it as a recognized dogma, a generally acknowledged truth, that faith in Christ is an instrument of justification or salvation, is at pains to point out what is the essential quality of this saving faith. He insists upon the fact, that its most obvious characteristic—assent to doctrinal formulas—if unaccompanied by practical effort to bring the moral life into conformity with the truths to which, professedly, assent is given, has no saving or religious value. "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works ? can that faith save him ? If a brother or sister be naked, and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled ; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body ; what doth it profit ? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself" (ii. 14—17). The faith which a man merely says he has, the faith which consists—so far as it is possible in the circumstances for it to have any real existence—in mere mental assent to certain truths connected with religion, in mental assent followed by no token of the will's submission to new rules of conduct ; this faith—if indeed it can in any real sense be spoken of as faith—is in the sight of God wholly without justifying or saving efficacy. Some measure of such a spurious faith as this is common even to the devils ; they also "believe, and shudder." It was by no mere lip-

service, by no mere profession of assent to what God told him, that Abraham found favour in His sight, but by the real surrender of himself to God, making itself manifest in his obedience to the command to slay his son. And no less was it by works, by embracing the opportunity of manifesting self-surrender, that Rahab was justified, when she "received the messengers, and sent them out another way." Faith is the combination of real mental assent and real moral submission to religious doctrine; and assent and submission exist in a state of mutual dependence. In the scornful or careless absence of submission there is absence also of intelligent assent. Such genuine profession of belief as in the circumstances is possible is an empty husk, it is a barren and lifeless thing; the truths which the mind is able sincerely to accept being, like those accepted by the devils, scarcely to be accounted moral or religious truths. "As the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead" (ii. 26).

St. James, it may be noticed, speaks of Abraham and of Rahab as being 'justified' by the faith which manifested itself in works. This, it will be observed, is not in accordance with St. Paul's use of the word 'justify' in the Epistle to the Romans. There the term relates to the status of converts to the Christian Church: faith, in the case of other persons than Christians, not justifying, but being reckoned for righteousness. St. James, however, is not concerned, like St. Paul, with setting forth the kind of connection that exists between faith and righteousness or salvation; but he is bent upon exhibiting the essential quality of any faith that can possibly lead to righteousness or salvation. And for this purpose there is no need to distinguish between the relation in which Jewish faith and that in which Christian faith stands to righteousness.

III. We pass on to notice what we may learn on the



subject of faith from the Epistles of St. Peter. He does not say very much that is definite, but perhaps we have enough to show what was his general conception of it. He seems to recognize, as we have seen that St. Paul recognizes, three broad aspects or kinds of faith, namely, faith in God, a faith in Christ consisting in assent to the doctrines of the gospel, and a faith of close attachment to the Person of the risen Lord.

Apparently it is this last kind of faith that is chiefly in his mind. St. Paul, in writing to his converts, wished to treat more especially of justifying faith, the faith through which persons made change of creed and became baptized members of the Christian Church, and which, after their conversion, they were under manifest obligation to openly preserve and cherish in spite of difficulties and persecutions. But St. Peter seems to dwell upon another and a more peculiarly Christian kind of faith—a kind by no means overlooked or forgotten by St. Paul—constituting a tie of personal attachment to the risen Saviour. It may, perhaps, be not unfitly spoken of as an esoteric faith, in contrast with the exoteric faith of practical assent to gospel principles. It is a faith, as we shall afterwards see, which has a very special connection with the newness that characterizes the Christian life, and with a clear realization of the fact of Christ's bodily resurrection from the dead.

This kind of faith, then, it appears to be that St. Peter has in mind, when in the opening chapter of his first Epistle he writes as follows: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power

of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold temptations, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (i. 3—9). This, also, he probably refers to when he says—"Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom withstand stedfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world" (v. 8, 9).

But he is not forgetful of man's obligation to have and to cultivate faith in God. He seems to tell his readers that the faith of attachment to the Person of the living Christ is itself a new source of faith in God the Father. "Christ was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, which raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God" (i. 20, 21).

Lastly, a justifying or saving faith, consisting in assent to the principles of the gospel, seems to be the kind of faith presented to us in the following passage of the first Epistle: "It is contained in scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame. For you therefore which believe is the preciousness: but for such as disbelieve, The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner" (ii. 6, 7). And

perhaps it is this doctrinal faith in Christ, rather than the faith of personal attachment to Him, which is intended in one of the two passages in which faith is spoken of in the second Epistle : "Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue ; and in your virtue knowledge ; and in your knowledge temperance ; and in your temperance patience ; and in your patience godliness ; and in your godliness love of the brethren ; and in your love of the brethren love" (i. 5—7).

## CHAPTER X.

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS.

I. WE have now to collect the results of the preceding investigation, and see how far they may be harmonized into one consistent whole. The latter course of our inquiry has rendered familiar to us three principal conceptions of religious faith, these being faith in God, justifying faith, and a faith of attachment to the Person of the risen Christ. And it is, first of all, the purpose of this chapter to show that all the views of faith which we have noticed as presented to us by New Testament writers may be placed under one or another of these three heads. Further, an endeavour will be made to exhibit each kind of faith, after its contents have been arrived at by bringing together what different writers say concerning it, in a succinct and compendious form. Having then before us the three kinds, we shall inquire what relations subsist between them. And finally, the reader's attention will be asked to certain conditions or circumstances which are represented as being attendant upon faith. This chapter, it may be added, while summing up the results of the past investigation, is also designed to be in some measure introductory to the discussion of the following Book, in which it is proposed to find a philosophical vindication of the Scriptural doctrine of religious faith.

We begin with the consideration of faith in God. What are the noticeable manifestations and characteristics of it?

We learn from St. Matthew that the man who has this faith is a man who is conscious of receiving, and endeavours to obey, a call from God to be an active worker in His service ; also that he is a man who, realizing that a power of overcoming difficulties is committed to him, realizes that it is committed to him only as God's servant, and only so long as he seeks in prayer for the continued renewal of the great gift. Such a man, when he prays, knows that he will receive the thing for which he definitely asks, because he knows that the thing for which he asks is an object which God has placed before him to be laboured for, and which therefore He certainly will enable him in due measure to obtain. And we further seem to learn from St. Matthew, that the man who has faith in God is one who orders his whole life in submission to and dependence upon His Will.

To the conception of faith in God, as a disposition to work for Him in confident dependence upon His aid, there is added, in St. Mark, the element of love to man. The man who, having heard the moral teaching of the gospel, would succeed in doing great things in God's service must be one who cultivates a spirit of brotherly affection. Faith in God, regarded as a means of ensuring the accomplishment of mighty works, has no efficacy, is a spurious faith, unless there is found in or with it a disposition to love and help our fellow men. And how, we may ask, does love to man come to be associated with this kind of faith? Apparently it is in this way. Faith in God implies, not only a disposition to work for Him who is our Lord, but also a disposition to work, in the way of imitation and co-operation, for Him in whose image we are made. And since God is revealed to us in the gospel as a God of love, who makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust, there can be no

satisfactory imitation of Him or co-operation with Him, if love to man is not duly represented.

From St. Luke we derive confirmation of the view presented by St. Mark, and also the further idea of patient and hopeful submission to God's Will in time of long-continued trial.

In St. John we have presented to us, as an aspect of faith in God, the giving credence to His testimony concerning His Son. And this we may no doubt take to include—what indeed the term faith, in Greek, itself implies—the accepting as true whatever God may say.

Passing on to the Epistles of St. Paul we find faith in God there depicted as a habit or mode of consciousness, in relation to God, which is both rewarded by Him and accepted by Him in lieu of righteousness. And we seem to learn, first, from the writer's references to the Gentile world, that what he means by faith is a practical recognition of God's claims to reverent service as the Creator and Moral Ruler of mankind ; and secondly, from his allusions to the history of Abraham, that faith in God manifests itself in following God's directions and having steadfast assurance of His unfailing willingness and power to fulfil His promises. Faith may thus be said to include hope.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews treats at some length of a faith in God which he exhibits as a combination of reverent obedience and assured hope. It is a practical recognition of God as a Being who has every claim to loyal service from the creatures He has made, but who nevertheless will, according to His promise, at some future time abundantly recompense those who serve Him. And, inasmuch as faith consists partly of hope, it may be regarded as including that patience which is the offspring of hope.

St. James appears to take the same view of faith in God

as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in that he regards obedience and hope as constituting a manifestation of it. But besides this he seems to regard it also as consisting in assurance that God will answer the prayers of those who pray to Him aright, together with apprehension of the moral truth that to ask for wisdom is to pray aright.

Lastly, we notice that St. Peter, though he makes allusion to faith in God, does not seem to supply any material from which we can frame a description of it.

Can we now combine, so that they will together form one harmonious conception, the descriptions thus culled from the New Testament writers? Apparently there is no great difficulty in exhibiting them in such a combination. If we take, as the root idea of faith in God, recognition of Him and self-surrender to Him as our Creator and our Moral Ideal, we shall find that all the manifestations and views of faith in God, which are put before us in the New Testament, are such as may well be derived from the one source. Faith in God, regarded in the light of this root idea, and from an *a priori* standpoint, would seem to be made up of three chief constituents; viz. (1) sensitiveness to His revelation of Himself, so as to respond to it gladly in whatsoever manner or measure it may be given; (2) acquiescence in what He does or forbears to do, so as to be, even in the absence of a lively hope, patient and submissive; (3) a ready spirit of obedience to commands, so as to have a continued consciousness of being in His service. And when He further makes Himself known to us as a God who answers prayer, and as a God who loves His people and purposes to reward abundantly those who diligently serve Him, then, as is evident, faith, involving assent to this new revelation, acquires a wider connotation. Faith in God comes to include a confident

calling upon Him in prayer to give the strength—which experience teaches will otherwise be wanting—needful for carrying out His commands. It likewise comes to include hope, or expectation of blessedness for ourselves in the time to come, and also love towards our fellow men, as being equally with ourselves the objects of His loving care.

This presentation of faith in God appears to harmonize extremely well with all the scattered notices which the New Testament supplies. It appears, in fact, to be substantially identical with the collective view obtained by carefully piecing them together. There seems to be no point of any importance which does not find expression in it, and there seems to be no part of it which some New Testament writer does not mention. We may take it, then, to be an intelligible and sufficient description of what the New Testament teaches to be faith in God. To the Gentile, faith in God is the surrender of the self to Him, recognized as Creator and Moral Ideal; to the Jew, it may be said to be the surrender of the self to Him, recognized as Creator, as Moral Ideal, and as a God who will in due time recompense service, and who answers prayer; to the Christian, it appears to be the surrender of the self to Him, as Creator, as Moral Ideal, as a God who will in due time recompense service and who answers prayer, and as a God who loves, not only him who makes his offering of self-surrender, but all mankind, all creatures that He has made. This faith itself, this attitude of consciousness—apart from any service which it may cause men to perform—we seem to be taught that God rewards; and this faith—apart from any intrinsic merit in the actions to which it leads—God is pleased to reckon for righteousness.

II. The faith which comes most prominently before us in the Gospel narratives is a faith which consists in appre-



hension of the superhuman or Divine nature which belonged to Jesus Christ in the period of His earthly ministry. That which is the most conspicuous in the Acts of the Apostles and the general body of the Epistles is a faith which consists in a practical assent, obviously including submission to the rite of baptism, to the preaching of the apostles concerning their risen Lord and the salvation offered in His name. There seems to be no occasion to collate passages in the Gospels exemplifying the former, or passages in the Epistles making mention of the latter. For, on the one hand, there can scarcely be any question, that the various recorded manifestations of faith which have for their object Jesus Christ as He showed Himself on earth are essentially of one and the same kind ; all being alike some intuitive perception, or knowledge not wholly based on evidence of sense, of His superhuman or Divine Character and Mission. And, on the other hand, there cannot be much reasonable doubt, that all references to subjective faith, other than faith in God and the faith of personal attachment to Jesus Christ, in the Acts of the Apostles and the several Epistles are references to one and the same kind of faith ; references, that is, to a justifying or saving faith which consists, in one way or another, in a practical assent to the doctrines and principles of the gospel.

Some persons indeed, it may here be noticed, have seemed to find a discrepancy between the teaching of St. Paul and that of St. James on the subject of justifying or saving faith. But for this view there appears to be no valid ground. St. Paul, no less than St. James, would certainly repudiate the idea that any saving or religious efficacy could possibly attach to a mere intellectual assent to religious truth, to assent unaccompanied by endeavour to fashion the life in accordance with the truth assented to.

His whole object, it may almost be said, is to insist upon faith as having no other value whatever than that of being a means to righteousness. Doubtless it is the case that the two apostles do not regard the new religion from quite the same point of view. While St. Paul joyfully dwells upon righteousness as the consequence of a new principle of grace attaching to membership of the Christian Church, St. James soberly looks for righteousness in an enlightened obedience to newly revealed commands of God. And while St. Paul, in speaking of God's gift of eternal life, is careful to point out that it is won for us by Christ, St. James makes mention of it only as bestowed by God upon those who love Him. Righteousness and life, in the view chiefly put forward by St. Paul, proceed from God in consequence of justifying faith in Christ; in the view chiefly taken by St. James, they are the manifestation and the recompense of a developed faith in God.

But there is no real discrepancy between the two views. Justifying faith being taken to be—what both apostles appear to agree in understanding that it is—only a special new development of faith in God, occasioned by His revelation of the redemptive work of Christ, we may say that, while St. Paul rather dwells upon what is new in this development, St. James has regard to its fundamental nature, as still being faith in God. And while St. Paul may be said to urge his readers to allow their faith in God to develop into the form of justifying faith, St. James cautions those whom he addresses against the tempting but futile course of taking up with a spurious imitation of justifying faith—an imitation that shows, by its indifference to the commands of God, that it is not really founded upon faith in Him.

Understanding, then, that the faith in Jesus of which the Gospels speak may be taken to be all of one kind, and

that the doctrinal faith in Christ of which other parts of the New Testament make mention may likewise be taken to be all of one kind, let us consider whether the former may not be classed with the latter under the head of justifying faith. That it, like justifying faith, is a special manifestation of faith in God we may at present take for granted, deferring till a little later in the chapter more particular notice of this position. We may for the moment concentrate our attention upon the point, that apprehension of the superhuman or Divine nature of our Lord, such as was exhibited by the persons who confidently sought His help or gladly listened to His words, is, when otherwise regarded as a mode of religious consciousness, essentially the same thing as yielding assent to the doctrines and facts proclaimed by the apostles.

Let it be first remarked, that we seem to have strong *primâ facie* evidence of the two manifestations of faith being identical in kind, in the circumstance that our Lord Himself speaks of each as being the one condition of obtaining such salvation as He was bringing into the world. When we find, as we do, that He asserted of persons who believed in Him in the time of His earthly ministry, that they were saved by their faith ; and when we find, as we do, that He declared, in reference to persons who had no knowledge of Him during His life on earth, that assent to the preaching of the gospel, together with baptism, was the condition of their being saved ; when we find this, we seem to have good ground for identifying the two conceptions of faith. It seems sufficiently manifest that the faith of the Canaanitish woman and the faith of Lydia of Thyatira, the faith of those who brought to Jesus the man sick of the palsy and the faith of those who received the word of Peter on the Day of Pentecost, proceeded from the same inward source, and

were in outward expression essentially the same in kind.

But let us, regarding faith in its aspect of intellectual acceptance of Divine things, consider the manner of its operation. Let us consider, in the case both of the faith exhibited towards our Lord in His lifetime on earth and of the faith in Him that afterwards resulted from the preaching of the gospel, what it is to which the mind yields assent, and on what grounds assent is based. Apparently, the primary object of belief on the part of all persons who approached Jesus with any degree of faith was, that He stood before them as in some very special sense a Representative of God; that the attributes and purposes of God were in some very special way made manifest in Him. This at least they were persuaded of before they learned from His own lips the more exact truth concerning His Nature and His Mission; and it was this persuasion—involving, as of course it did, a subsequent readiness to listen to whatever He might teach them—that sufficiently constituted the faith which He commended. And apparently, the primary object of belief on the part of all persons who assented to the doctrines preached by the apostles was, that God, by means of the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ, had created the Church as an ark of refuge, into which it was His Will that men should enter and find salvation from sin and death. This at least they assented to before they went on to learn full particulars of their relation to the risen Christ and of the kind of life that He expected them to lead. In either case we seem to have, as the primary expression of faith, recognition of, or assent to, a revelation of Himself—a revelation of His Character and of His dealings with mankind—made by God through the agency of Jesus Christ. In the one case Jesus was accepted as a unique Repre-

sentative of God, having some task to perform, some message to deliver ; in the other He was accepted as God's Agent, having successfully accomplished the initiation of a marvellous and mighty work, the carrying on and completing of which was still delegated to Him. And between these two offices of Christ, regarded as objects appealing to consciousness for recognition, there does not appear to be any essential difference in kind.

Nor, apparently, is there any essential difference in the evidence on which recognition or assent is based. Four principal reasons would seem to have been operative in leading men to assent to the claim of Jesus to have come among them as the unique Representative of God. First, there was His moral goodness, shown in the general tenour of His life and teaching : He stood before men as their Moral Ideal. Secondly, men were impressed by His wonderful gift of working miracles : they saw in Him the attribute of Divine power. Thirdly, there was a harmony between the circumstances of His life and the predictions of the Scriptures concerning the expected Messiah. Fourthly, the testimony of our Lord Himself, a Man who presumably spoke the truth, accorded with that of John the Baptist, already acknowledged to be a teacher sent from God. And four similar reasons would seem to have been chiefly efficacious in convincing men that the religion which the apostles taught was Divine truth. We have, first, the suitability of the gospel system, both as expressing the justice and the love of God, and as affording satisfaction to man's deepest needs ; secondly, various manifest tokens of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the infant Church ; thirdly, the agreement of the circumstances of Christ's death and alleged resurrection with the predictions of ancient prophecy ; fourthly, the preaching of the apostles, themselves convinced believers in the

doctrines to which they testified. If the reasons here put forward, as those which in all likelihood principally influenced men's minds in the reception of the two parts of God's revelation of Himself through Jesus Christ, are approximately correct, it seems clear that mental assent, regarded as a product of the activity of the illative consciousness, may be pronounced essentially the same in kind in the two cases.

The faith, then, of the Gospel narratives may be taken to be a special and temporary phase of the justifying faith of the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. And justifying faith may be described as consisting in a practical assent to the chief facts, including the interpretation put upon them by the apostles, connected with God's revelation of Himself in the life and work of Jesus Christ; or, in other words, as consisting in acceptance of the doctrines and principles of the Christian Church.

III. Besides justifying faith, there appears to be a faith in Christ of quite another kind. This is a faith which is the exclusive property and possession of baptized Christians. It consists in some sort of close attachment, the precise nature of which we shall have hereafter to consider, to Himself as He lives and reigns in heaven and watches over the fortunes of His Church below. Not much that is definite can be said at present as to the nature of this faith, because the comparatively few passages in which it is spoken of do not themselves suffice to exhibit it in a clear light as an actual mode of human consciousness. Some further investigation is required, which will form a part of the following Book. We have seen, however, that by virtue of this faith man is enabled—in so far as he possesses it—to serve God in true righteousness; he sees and acts as if with the Mind and Will of Christ; he

overcomes the world ; he loves with something of Divine love his fellow men. There is, it may be briefly said, a faith in Christ which consists in some sort of close attachment to the glorified Person of His resurrection, and which enables the believer to live in some real measure the Christlike life. Giving it a distinctive name, we may provisionally speak of it as a faith of attachment to the risen Christ.

IV. We have reached the conclusion that mention is made in the New Testament Scriptures of three separate aspects or kinds of faith. It will be well, in order to a clearer apprehension of the whole matter, that we should endeavour to understand the nature of the relations that subsist between them. Are they, as modes of consciousness, different things ; or are they only different aspects or phases of the same thing ?

As regards faith in God and justifying faith, it has been pointed out already that apostolic writers certainly seem to look upon the latter as no more than a special development, occasioned by circumstances, of the former. Persons who have real faith in God give evidence of this faith by accepting His revelation of Himself in Christ when it is brought before them. They believe it and they act upon it, and so are numbered among those who have justifying faith in Christ. Further, a true justifying faith in Christ would seem to be obviously impossible without a previous, or at least an accompanying, faith in God. And so we may notice that St. Paul, in reminding the Gentile Thessalonians of their conversion, seems to point to a process of learning first to reverence and worship God, and then to acknowledge the truth of particular doctrines relating to His Son ; and that St. Luke, in describing the conversion of the jailor of Philippi, speaks of him as responding to the exhortation to believe on the Lord Jesus,

and then of his having believed in God. (1 Thess. i. 9, 10 ; Acts xvi. 31—34.)

But that which in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles seems to be manifestly implied, rather than distinctly stated, may be said to be plainly taught in the Gospel of St. John. The teaching, that is, is plain if, without demanding that faith in God should be directly spoken of by name as the source of faith in Christ, we are satisfied that 'to be of God' and 'to have God for our Father' are equivalent expressions to 'having faith in God.' The argument which was employed in Chapter IV. to show that faith in Christ is dependent upon faith in God, and which need not here be more than referred to, is equally available for showing that faith in Christ is a development, or manifestation in special circumstances, of faith in God. For, apparently, it is only as a special manifestation of faith in God, called for by Him and made possible by Him, that it has this dependence. It is the acceptance of a special revelation of Himself, a revelation to which He gives the believer power to respond. As some special achievement of mental or bodily activity is but the expression of vital energy, so justifying faith in Christ would seem to be but the expression, in given circumstances, of faith in God. And as a wise parent who makes great demands upon his son is careful to support and direct his strength, so, apparently, God enables those who have faith in Him to manifest this faith in the new way which He points out.

Between justifying faith and the faith of attachment to the risen Church there appears to be a relation of dependence of quite another kind. Bodily activity, shown, let us say, by a person's walking into a house, is, as we have just noticed, dependent upon vital energy ; but it is in quite another sense that whatever befalls him in the



house is dependent upon his having obtained entrance into it. In the one case there is a cause continuously acting along with the effect and manifesting itself in it ; in the other case the cause has done its work when it has brought the person in contact with other influences. In a way analogous to this latter relation justifying faith appears to be the cause of the faith of attachment to the risen Christ. It brings man within the pale of the Christian Church, and in this manner causes whatever new mode of consciousness may have its origin in membership of the Church. To denote the new mode of consciousness, which is the peculiar endowment of the baptized Christian, the New Testament writers employ the old term, faith ; but their use of the term does not appear to signify that the new kind of faith has any closer resemblance to the old than that which consists in their both being marked manifestations of submission to the influence of Christ.

If justifying faith is thus distinct from the faith of attachment, still more must faith in God, in its other manifestations, be taken to be distinct. Faith in God is one mode of human consciousness, the faith of attachment to the risen Christ is quite another. They are two kinds of faith, not two aspects or phases of one and the same kind. They appear, indeed, to be connected by the notion, common to both, of man's self-surrender to a Person who is infinitely higher than himself. But even so it does not appear that the self-surrender springs, in the two cases, from the same source in the human consciousness. In the one case surrender is made to the Supreme God ; in the other it is made to Jesus Christ, not as God, but as the human and Divine Head of the Christian Church.

Before we pass on to the next section it may not be amiss to consider for a moment in what relation trust stands to faith, for the term is very commonly employed

among us to express a consciousness which must be, at least, very nearly allied to faith. It appears to be, in fact, a part of faith. We speak of putting our trust in God, and we speak of putting our trust in Christ; and what we have in mind when we so speak seems really to be, in either case, a particular exercise of faith in God. Trust in God is unfeigned and practical assent to His revelation of Himself as Father. It is reliance upon One who watches over His people and directs their ways, and whose Will it is that they, following His guidance in what they do and aim at, should divest themselves of all anxiety, all sense of responsibility, in regard to issues and events. And by trust in Christ appears to be signified assent to God's revelation of Himself in Christ, as having, through the redemptive work of His Son, granted to the repentant sinner full remission of his sins and bestowed upon him the gift of eternal life. It is thus very much the same thing as Christian hope. It may, perhaps, be correctly described as a phase of hope, in which gladness with reference to the future is less dominant than a feeling of security.

V. An essential part of justifying faith is, as we have seen, intellectual assent to certain propositions, propositions which do not, in the nature of things, admit of being demonstrated. They are such that no man, starting only from premises derived from intuition or from evidence of sense, can prove them to another by logical demonstration. If they commend themselves to the intelligence of an individual thinker, yet any logical argument that he may employ to establish their truth cannot but rest upon some premise or premises which it is reasonably open to another man to dispute. Such a truth, for example, as the efficacy of Christ's Passion to redeem the world cannot be impressed upon men's minds by any course of strictly logical ratio-

ination, unless certain premises, such as the absolute truthfulness of Christ and the absolute accuracy of the records of His teaching, are first assumed ; and these premises themselves the pure logical understanding has no sufficient ground for accepting. And yet it seems to be abundantly manifest that the New Testament writers regard unfeigned assent to the doctrines of the gospel as reasonable conduct. The truths which they proclaim are, in their view, truths which are capable of being, not merely not dissented from, not merely acquiesced in as supported by a large amount of evidence, not merely admitted to be in the very highest degree probable, but actually and really known.

To accept the view presented to us in the Scriptures is, apparently, to recognize it as a fact, that the mind has, by the constitution of man's nature, some other way of arriving at conviction besides the ways of intuition, sensible evidence, and logical inference. And the mental operation by which the thinker reaches conclusions, of the truth of which he is convinced, but which he cannot demonstrate, appears to be one which depends, as regards the particular conclusions that are reached, very much upon his own mental and moral history. The conclusions arrived at are his individual conclusions, derived by intellectual process from evidence which appeals to him individually. While the mental operation of dealing with the particular facts and notions, which constitute evidence, is in kind the same for all men before whom they come, the meaning and importance of them are estimated by each man for himself alone ; and thus different conclusions may reasonably be based by different persons upon the same mass of evidence.

A prominent feature in the argument of the following Book will be a much-needed exposition of the reasonable-

ness and reliability of the mental process, whereby individual thinkers yield unqualified assent to the alleged truths of revelation.

VI. Persons who in one way or another manifest want of faith in God are frequently spoken of in Scripture in terms of blame and reprobation. The conduct in which the absence or the imperfection of their faith appears, is held to be conduct which deserves to be censured and condemned. Want of faith is moreover, in some passages, regarded as more or less equivalent to disobedience, as conduct which, being of the nature of disobedience, may be fittingly chastised. "By their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by thy faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee" (Rom. xi. 20, 21). "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48).

It seems, then, to be quite clear that want of faith is looked upon as being, at least in some degree, avoidable; as being conduct, or the result of conduct, for which the agent may properly be held responsible. To some extent it is an effect which has proceeded from him as its independent and creative source: it is not entirely the product of causes determining the will in accordance with immutable laws of which he is the unhappy victim. In other words, our Lord and His apostles, when they rebuke men for their unbelief, are plainly thinking of them as persons who have been endowed by God with some measure of free-will. Man is not, in their view, a being whose resolutions are formed, and conduct moulded, only by the influences of thought and feeling; but he is gifted with some power of action uncontrolled by motives, with some power of initiating, apart from the strength of motives,

and apart from any other influences of established character, the present decisions of his will. The New Testament presentation of faith in God and justifying faith would thus seem to be, in part, dependent for its validity upon the truth of the hypothesis, that there is in the constitution of man's nature some free element of will, to which, since it is untrammelled by any forces external to itself, an independent responsibility and accountability can be attached. In the following Book the important and difficult question of the nature of human freedom will, it is hoped, be satisfactorily elucidated.

BOOK II.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF FAITH.



## CHAPTER I.

### HISTORICAL INFERENCE AND PROOF.

I. IN preparation for a philosophical discussion of religious belief the author has already submitted to the public a volume on *The Theory of Inference*. A recapitulation of such portion of the argument of this volume, as it seems to be necessary that we should here have before us, will constitute the substance of the present introductory chapter.

When the mind, in making itself acquainted with the world in which it has existence, passes from old to new knowledge by means of an intuition of certain relations connecting the newly apprehended phenomenon with others which it already has before it, it performs a genuine act of inference. The relations of which it is intuitively cognizant are, in almost all cases of inferring, relations of causation. A given phenomenon having taken place, it is aware that another phenomenon, being either the cause or the effect, is discoverable by means of its apprehension of these relations. Thus a person sees a tree lying uprooted in his path, and is led to infer that there has been a storm of wind. Or he hears during absence from home of the illness of his gardener, and infers that on his return he will find his garden in poor condition. The former instance is an example of the mind's discovery of a cause, the latter of its discovery of an effect. Of the discovery of effects—the process of which is precisely similar to that of the



discovery of causes—no further separate mention need be made, since this division of the subject has no special bearing upon the elucidation of religious belief.

Of inference there are four kinds, which may be spoken of as induction, deduction, illation, and delation. All but the last are concerned with the discovery of causes.

Induction is the discovery, or the approximate discovery, of the cause of an effect by means of comparing a selected set of antecedents of it with sets of antecedents of other instances precisely similar; or by means of contrasting the selected set of antecedents with sets of antecedents of other circumstances or phenomena from which, in each case, an instance of the effect is known to be wholly absent. If the method of comparison is employed, the argument is, that the required cause must, in consequence of the uniformity of nature, be contained—if anywhere at all in the selected set of antecedents—among those of them which are in kind common to all the sets. And the chief work of induction is to find the few kinds of antecedent that are present in common in a large number and variety of cases. If we proceed by the method of contrast, we argue that any antecedent, of which an instance anywhere presents itself in the absence of an instance of the effect, cannot, by reason of the uniformity of nature, be the required cause. And our business is to eliminate, by means of this consideration, as many of the antecedents in our selected set as we find that we are able. In the method of comparison we retain common kinds of antecedent, rejecting any that are absent from any one of the other sets. In the method of contrast we reject any that are present in any one of the other sets, retaining only such as are peculiar to the selected set. Both methods may often be employed in connection with the same inquiry.

If we wish, for example, to ascertain the cause of a certain person's remarkably good health, we may find somewhere in his parentage and education and way of living a few antecedent circumstances, seemingly having some close connection with physical condition, that are, in kind, common to him and to a number of other persons in the enjoyment of good health, into whose antecedents we inquire. We should then, following the method of comparison, reach the conclusion that the required cause of our friend's good health is contained among these few circumstances. Their number may now perhaps be reduced, and the cause more approximately discovered, by contrasting them with the antecedents of a number of persons whose health is not satisfactory. For such of them as appear among the antecedents of any one of the unhealthy persons may with certainty be rejected.

Deduction is an act of recognition of that uniformity of nature of which in induction we make use. It consists in ascertaining the cause of an effect by means of apprehending its necessary similarity to the known cause of a known similar effect. If we are aware that a particular B is caused by A, we may at once infer that any new instance of B that comes before us likewise has an A as its cause. A person argues correctly who speaks as follows: This tree of mine, I happen to know, received this injury from frost; therefore frost is certainly the cause of the precisely similar injury manifest in that tree of yours. And the observed circumstance of the second injured tree may be regarded, if need be, as sure evidence that there has been frost in its neighbourhood.

It will be observed that both induction and deduction presuppose the existence somewhere of exact counterparts of the phenomena with which they deal. In induction the given effect is apprehended as being such that the

presence, in other sets of circumstances, of instances precisely similar, or the absence, from other sets of circumstances, of instances precisely similar, can be duly noted and made use of. And the cause, as yet unknown, is apprehended as existing in the same indefinite numbers as the effect. In deduction the mind has immediately before it an exact counterpart of the effect, and of the corresponding cause it at once affirms the presence of a counterpart. Phenomena, whether causes or effects, are looked upon simply as belonging to kinds or classes, all the members of each kind or class being conceived of and dealt with as identically alike. Thus conceived of and dealt with they are the material with which the mind constructs its systems of laws of nature.

II. But phenomena do not thus really exist in nature. Phenomena, as we have actual experience of them, do not present themselves to our senses as in all respects similar to any others that we have known before or can possibly become acquainted with. Besides all that they have in common with other members of their class, they have touches of their own which make them more or less unique. And instead of being transferable from one situation to another, they are apprehended as standing in relation to the particular things that happen to be around them. The good health of one person is not identical, as a concrete phenomenon, with the good health of another; nor is injury by frost the same phenomenon to him who owns and loves the injured tree, as it is to him who now for the first time sets eyes upon it. Phenomena, so far as they are conceived of as having elsewhere in nature exact counterparts of themselves, and as existing in their individuality or separateness from their surroundings, are mere abstractions of the mind. It is, then, only in relation to abstractions—or, in other words, to certain selected

portions of phenomena—that induction and deduction are modes of inference.

If we would take an effect as it really is, and seek for a cause as it has really happened, we cannot proceed by the method of induction. Induction belongs to the field of natural law, in which concrete things are treated as clothed abstractions, existing in indefinite numbers and unrelated to their surroundings. In the field of history, in order to ascertain really concrete causes of really concrete effects—as, for example, the cause of the well-known Conservative, John Smith, voting for the Liberals at a parliamentary election—a quite different mode of inference is required and made use of. The mode of inference in question is that which has been referred to as illation.

In order to the discovery of the cause of a given effect, whether the effect be a clothed abstraction in the field of natural law or a really concrete effect in the field of history; the mind necessarily seeks the aid of other observed phenomena. In induction it employs phenomena perceived to contain abstractions precisely similar to the one before it; in illation it makes use of such concrete phenomena as it is able to include in one and the same whole with the effect with which it is concerned. In induction it makes search for a common or similar abstract cause of a number of precisely similar instances of the effect; in illation it looks for a common or joint concrete cause of a number of effects diverse but concurrent.

III. Leaving now the comparison and contrast of illation with induction, let us pass on to more particular consideration of the illative process. In the field of history the mind knows nothing of law or uniformity in nature, this having reference exclusively to similars. But, instead of uniformity, it apprehends and makes use of the companion principle of continuity. By means of this principle

it derives its premises from its own varied and concrete experience. And the process of deriving them belongs to that fourth kind of inference mentioned as *delation*.

The principle of continuity, so far as it has reference to sequences of concrete phenomena, is as follows:—By whatever kinds of concrete phenomena a given kind of concrete phenomenon has been causally preceded or followed in the region of our experience, by the same it has been or will be preceded or followed in regions that lie not very far beyond. If we have experience of concrete *a* having been preceded sometimes by *A*, sometimes by *B*, and sometimes by *C*, then we infer *delatively*—making application of the principle of continuity—that any new concrete *a* has as its causal antecedent either an *A*, or a *B*, or a *C*. Or if concrete *A* has been followed sometimes by *a*, sometimes by *b*, and sometimes by *c*, we infer that any new concrete *A* will give rise to either an *a*, or a *b*, or a *c*. And this kind of inference supplies us with the premises necessary for *illation*.

Let us suppose that some historical event has excited our interest, the cause or explanation of which we are anxious to discover. John Smith, let us say, though a pronounced Conservative, voted for the Liberals at the last election. Why did he so act? The essence of the *illative* method of solving this problem is the formulating a hypothesis which links together and explains a group of phenomena, a group consisting of the given action and a number of other concurrently observed circumstances. And in order that the conclusion may be sure, these phenomena must, in general, be of two different kinds. There must be among them something which might be a cause of the situation or solution or conclusion which we hypothetically formulate, as well as something, besides the action of John Smith, which might follow upon it as an effect.

Now, unless we have already had experience of some sort of similar action, the problem is to us insoluble. We have no premises to start from. But let us suppose that our acquaintance with human nature is sufficient to enable us to assign past instances of voting in opposition to party to one or another of several different motives. We have, it may be, known it arise, (1) from temporary dissatisfaction with the proceedings of a party, or (2) from a warm interest in some particular measure favoured by opponents, or (3) from a strong preference for an opposition candidate. We accordingly infer delatively, that John Smith's vote is explicable, if at all, in one of these three ways.

That the vote is due to one of the three kinds of cause that have been mentioned is the premise, or collection of premises, from which we start. We now look round and call to our aid other circumstances which may be provisionally assumed to spring from one common or joint cause with the vote in question, circumstances which seem likely to have some close connection with it. John Smith, let us say, was present at an important Liberal meeting at which it was known that the candidate would announce the policy of his party on the questions of education and Church reform. This action of his our experience enables us, by means of delative inference, to ascribe, either (1) to a keen interest in education or in Church reform, or (2) to a desire to listen to the candidate's acknowledged eloquence, or (3) to the fact of his being a personal friend. Putting together the two circumstances of the vote and the attendance at the meeting, we must conclude that, if one common cause produced them both, it must be, either (1) interest in education or in Church reform, or (2) regard for the person of the opposition candidate.

Let us now call in the assistance of a fact or phenomenon

of the nature of an operating cause. Let us suppose that we hear John Smith spoken of as an enthusiastic educationist. We have here a circumstance which may possibly lead to the explanation of which we are in search. Enthusiasm in the work of education might induce a person, either (1) to endeavour to promote it by means of legislation, or (2) to energize on its behalf in some other way. Comparing then these possible kinds of effect of this known cause with the previously ascertained possible kinds of cause of the two observed effects, we find that there is one kind of activity, namely, political or legislative interest in education, which may contain among its instances or manifestations, both the cause of the vote and the attendance at the meeting, and the effect of a well-known educational enthusiasm. We proceed accordingly to formulate a definite instance which will perform the double function of cause and effect. We conclude—more or less certainly and more or less correctly—that desire to support the Liberals in their proposed attempt to forward education was the common or joint cause of the vote which John Smith gave in opposition to his party and of his attendance at the Liberal meeting, and was at the same time the effect of his recognized devotion to educational interests. Or, discarding now the associated circumstances of which we have made use, we consider only that his unexpected vote is reasonably accounted for.

Our formulated hypothesis links together, it will be observed, in one consistent whole two separate events and a known fact of character. It is the hypothesis wanted to complete and make intelligible the small historical picture of which they are constituent elements. It enables the mind to understand them as parts of one quasi-organic whole. And, thus connecting the phenomena together in relations of causation that harmonize with its own past

experience, it is accepted by the mind, with more or less confidence, as a new fact in the field of history.

The confidence with which the mind receives an explanatory hypothesis as a fact of history depends, primarily, upon one thing. This is the absence of any apprehension that other explanations may possibly be found. And this, again, depends in great measure upon the number of separate incidents which have been brought into the composition of the constructed whole. If several effects are to be accounted for by one common or joint cause, it is not difficult to see that, in general, the addition of effects reduces the number of possible common kinds of cause; that, the greater the number of independent effects all proceeding from one compound cause, the fewer are the alternative kinds of compound cause from which they can all alike proceed. Up to the point of the elimination of all but one, the number of possible explanations becomes, in general, continuously less with the introduction of new convergent facts of circumstantial evidence.

In another way, too, a multiplicity of convergent facts may be said to be a ground of confidence. It enables the mind to have a more vivid realization of the completed scene. A picture composed of many consistent details, and harmonizing with past experience in many points, is apparently entertained by the mind, as a representation of possible reality, much more readily and durably than one in which the details and the points are few.

Let us suppose, then, that we have a case in which a large number of concurrent circumstances, that excite the inquiring interest of the mind, are found to be together explicable, consistently with experience, in one only way. The mind is then likely to be well satisfied that in the supposed event which contains the explanation it has found a real fact of history. It has confidence in the



correctness of its inference, because it has a vivid realization of the event as the only single interpreter of the large body of circumstance that it has before it.

We have not yet, however, reached the ultimate ground of the mind's conviction. This appears to be the innate necessity under which it lies of finding causal explanations, consistent with experience, of the phenomena that attract its interest. Necessity is upon it to trace order in the field of history, no less than in the field of natural law. And the more explanatory an explanation is, the greater, that is, the amount of order it discloses, the more is it satisfactory and congenial to the mind; the stronger is the mind's conviction that it is to be received as true. The mind prefers to entertain any reasonable explanation, rather than to consent to contemplate chaos in the place of order. And it clings to the one reasonable explanation of a whole body of circumstance, even though other explanations, perhaps no less reasonable, may be forthcoming of separate portions of it; it clings to the one explanation, because a number of partial explanations are relatively chaos. What, it must needs ask if it listens to them, is the explanation of these explanations? And, in the absence of this, it regards them as of no account in comparison with that of which it is in possession.

IV. Precisely the same line of argument, as that which leads to the discovery of a new fact of history, is employed by the mind, explicitly or implicitly, to justify its assent to any alleged historical event. We have found, as the explanation of John Smith's vote, that he was anxious at the time of the election to promote education by means of legislation. This hypothesis is a fact which stands between, and links together, the causal circumstance of his known educational enthusiasm, and the consequential circumstances of his vote and his attendance at a Liberal

meeting. Let, now, our inferred conclusion be turned into the narrative statement, John Smith was evidently very much in earnest on the subject of education at the time of the last election. Making this statement, how are we to prove its truth?

We must, in general, show that it is a central fact in a causal chain; that there are other facts before it and after it which it serves to link together and explain; that with its aid a small historical picture is built up, a picture making intelligible, as parts of an orderly and consistent whole, a number of circumstances which would otherwise be more or less meaningless and chaotic. We must produce a cause, or causes, of which the event affirmed is, according to experience, one of several alternative effects; and we must produce effects of which it is, according to experience, one of several alternative common or joint causes. In other words, we must exhibit both *a priori* and *a posteriori* evidence of probability. We must show, by appealing to John Smith's known enthusiasm for education, that there was antecedent likelihood of his making some effort to advance the work by means of parliamentary interference; and we must show, by referring to his vote and his attendance at an opposition meeting, that there are after circumstances which almost depend for a causal explanation upon the truth of what we have affirmed.

In both historical inference, then, and historical proof the essential principle in accordance with which the mind works is one and the same. Causal circumstance, or *a priori* evidence, and consequential circumstance, or *a posteriori* evidence, are linked together, consistently with experience, in one intelligible whole by the event which is inferred or proved.

V. Let us now take notice of the part played by testi-

mony in producing conviction. There seems to be no occasion to consider here the process of inferring the personal credibility of witnesses, because we shall not be much concerned in this Book, either with the acceptance of statements on the sole evidence of testimony, or with the testimony of single witnesses. Testimony, so far as we shall mainly have to do with it, is that of a number of persons, and is corroborative of and corroborated by circumstance. This being so, the question of determining nicely the reliability of individual witnesses seems scarcely to arise.

Testimony, then, regarded as that of persons whose general character in respect of accurate and truthful statement is indeed known to us, but into whose credibility in relation to any particular assertion we make no special and exact inquiry, is simply a peculiar form of consequential circumstance. The affirmation of an event by any given person is a phenomenon, of the nature of an effect, which might, according to our experience of human action, proceed from any one of a number of alternative causes. It might proceed from accurately observing and truthfully reporting the event alleged to have occurred—in other words, from the actual occurrence of the event—or it might proceed from a variety of other conditions. According to our general estimate of the credibility of the witness, will be the range of alternative sources of his testimony which we think it needful to contemplate. The testimony even of one witness of very doubtful credibility is a consequential circumstance which, since it may have its true explanation in the actual occurrence of the event to which he testifies, is in its measure corroborative of other convergent evidence. But when the number of independent witnesses is considerable, or when, being few, their reputation for credibility stands very high, it is evident that the force of their united testimony is very

great. For it becomes exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to frame any hypothesis, other than that of the occurrence of the alleged event, which would account for the existence of their common statements.

In a certain sense it is possible to establish a fact of history by means of testimony alone, since the common cause or explanation of united testimony is not at first, as in the case of a body of convergent circumstance, merely a *kind* of cause or event, needing other evidence to narrow it into some definitely formulated instance. It is an event already defined in the statements of the witnesses: accurate observation and truthful speech being accepted as the common cause of their united testimony, that which they unite in testifying is at once definitely known. In general, however, even when the mind is quite satisfied as to the existence of the fact, other evidence of circumstance is agreeable to it, in order that the fact may be intelligently understood.

Two further points may be noticed. The first is, that testimony, though essentially a consequential circumstance, may, in the form of prophecy, come to be used as *a priori* evidence. For it may be testimony to the existence of causes which will in due time give rise to the event foretold.

The second point is, that the reasonable authority or force of testimony is not to be restricted to things which witnesses claim to have actually experienced. It extends also, though in a less degree, to things which they profess only to have inferred. The composite phenomenon, of a number of independent thinkers all drawing the same conclusion as to the cause of a given effect, is itself a congeries of effects to which the mind readily assigns, as their common cause, an objective correctness of reasoning on the part of each individual thinker. Thus,

in the case of trials in a court of law, not only do jurymen accept the common evidence of witnesses on points of sensible experience, but the public accepts the common inference of the jury from this evidence.

VI. A distinction of considerable importance may now be made between assent and belief. The operations of the mind, in making itself acquainted with the world of history, appear to be carried on for two purposes which to some extent are capable of being distinguished from each other. Knowledge is sought and knowledge is received, sometimes as an end and possession in itself, sometimes as a means to the practice of reasonable conduct. So far as the mind may be regarded as pursuing its investigations without any ulterior reference to conduct, it may be said to merely assent to the conclusions which it draws. And so far as it may be supposed to recognize that its conclusions have, or may have, a bearing upon conduct, its assent may be spoken of as belief. Thus a student, after reading some standard work on natural history, assents to the fact that there is abundance of large game to be met with in South Africa. An adventurous sportsman, however, believes it, marking the country as the possible scene of some future expedition.

A characteristic of belief is, that the assent which enters into it is for the most part durable assent. A proposition believed is likely to be one which has been well thought over; one which has stood the test of comparison with a variety of other propositions assented to or believed; one which has been found to harmonize, not only with some particular set of impressions existing in the mind, but with the general body of more or less permanent beliefs upon which conduct has hitherto been principally based. It is a proposition which is received

by the mind into its inner circle of coherent representations of the universe.

The importance of the distinction between belief and simple assent consists in this ;—that the former, besides being an intellectual operation, is distinctly an act of will. The will is intimately concerned with the proceedings of reason so far as they have a bearing upon conduct ; and, apparently, it rests with the will to determine whether a proposition of practical significance shall or shall not receive full investigation. A practical truth which could not but affect the will, if the will had to allow that there was no gainsaying it, may, apparently, be excluded by the will's resolve from the central body of thoroughly tested and permanent beliefs. A fact or a tenet to which the will is hostile is a fact or a tenet that must not be classed among things really believed, even though the mind sees no ground for withholding its assent. Further, since motives—that is, desires and currents of constraint—exercise an influence upon the determinations of the will, they, as well as the will itself, play their part in the whole operation by which the mind becomes fully and permanently convinced of practical verities.

A concluding remark may now be made. It is that a completed inference in the field of history is often worthy of being entitled knowledge. In respect of the intensity of conviction with which we naturally and properly hold it, a fact inferred from testimony and circumstantial evidence is often on an equality with facts of which we become directly cognizant through the evidence of sense. Do we not all know, for example, that three hundred years ago a lady named Elizabeth was queen of England, and also that last year's death-rate for the whole country was less than fifty in the

thousand? Nor is it only in respect of intensity of conviction that belief may fairly challenge comparison with knowledge conveyed to us by sense impressions. There are numberless illative inferences, such as those just instanced, the objective validity of which it would certainly be most unreasonable to impugn.

## CHAPTER II.

### REVELATION.

I. THE reader of this and the following chapter will not be in any way importuned to adopt as his own the religious beliefs of other men. The purpose of them is strictly philosophical, not hortative, and not theologically controversial. It is sought, first, to mark clearly the general nature of the propositions which constitute the body of Christian doctrine ; secondly, to make a careful survey of the intellectual grounds on which thinkers may reasonably give in their adhesion to such propositions ; and thirdly, to ascertain conditions under which assent is freely accorded by some, while it is studiously withheld by others. An endeavour will be made, both to exhibit the kind of course taken by minds which reach a state of belief in the doctrines of the gospel, and to give some reasonable explanation of the divergence from this course made by other minds apparently no less capable of sound thought. If, in the discussion of the difference between believers and disbelievers, there should seem to lurk any implication of a superiority of the former over the latter, any suggestion of an unreasonableness or blindness inherent in the state of disbelief, this will be no more than is unavoidable. It is the desire of the author to speak dispassionately, as to fellow-students of mental science, not, by advocacy of Christian tenets, to appeal to the



moral and religious consciousness. In other chapters particular doctrines will be set forth, as parts of a system of Christian philosophy, with a view to commending them to the intellectual and spiritual judgment of the reader : here he will only be asked to admit the general reasonableness of giving assent to alleged truths of revelation, to admit it even though in his own case the necessary conditions of assent are not fulfilled.

From the general body, however, of Christian doctrine, thus brought under consideration, the Being of God must be excepted. This will be the subject of special investigation later on. There are two reasons for here excepting it. First, it appears to be unique in the manner of its entrance into the religious consciousness. Secondly, belief in it appears to be the fundamental basis of all other Christian belief. It cannot be included, in a general exposition, among a number of doctrines to which assent may reasonably be given, both because it differs from all others in the manner by which assent to it is reached, and because it must be presupposed in order that the reasonableness of assent to them may be exhibited.

This latter consideration makes it necessary that the doctrine of the Being of God should be here assumed. Apparently we may take it as an axiomatic truth, that accounts of particular revelations of God cannot be accepted by the human mind, unless there is a prior persuasion that a God exists capable of revealing Himself in the ways alleged. Neither the method nor the conditions of belief in dogma can be reasonably explained—so at least, in seeming accordance with the tenour of Scripture, it is here contended—otherwise than on the hypothesis of a preliminary belief in a Personal God who is the Creator of the world and the Moral Ruler of mankind.

For the purpose of these chapters, then, let it be assumed.

that there exists, for the consciousness of some men, a Personal God, having thought and will, who is apprehended by them as the Creator of all things and the Moral Ruler of themselves and other men. The reader, be it understood, is not asked to make the assumption for himself. He is invited only to recognize the fact that there is in some men's consciousness an apprehension of God, in order that he may then go on to see how, on this basis, there can reasonably be developed a superstructure of belief in Christian doctrine. An addition to this assumption will be asked for presently, when the cause of some men being believers in Christian doctrine, and others not, comes to be considered.

The objects of religious or Christian belief—other than the Being of God—may be divided into two main classes. The first consists of propositions setting forth, as incident of history or as statement verbally imparted by some chosen messenger, God's gradual revelation of Himself as the Father of mankind. The second embraces the Incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, together with other doctrines that depend upon them. The reasonable grounds of belief in either class will be, in a general manner, presently set forth. Of the body of doctrine that constitutes the second class miracle forms an inseparable part, and the fundamental difficulty connected with it will afterwards have to be encountered.

II. Christian doctrine, as it is here understood, claims to be co-extensive and synonymous with revelation intended for the use of men in general. In so far as revelation may be supposed to contain, in the current expression of it, added elements of human speculation, and in so far, again, as it may be supposed to include Divine communications of a private nature, vindication of it forms no part of the purpose of this treatise. What view, then, does Chris-

tianity take of the essential character of revelation addressed to the general body of mankind?

Let us begin the consideration of this question by thinking of God in an inferior aspect of His Creatorship, by thinking of Him, that is, only as the Power that manifests itself in nature. No special revelation seems to be needed to make men aware of the existence of some mysterious agent or set of agents whose activity is the explanation, immediate or remote, of all phenomena. Apprehension of some living force or forces operating in or behind phenomena appears to be a natural mode of consciousness belonging to man in virtue of his humanity.

By studious contemplation of the ways of nature, including the developments of human history, man is able to form some estimate of that Power of which they are taken to be the expression. In the present day there may be said to be two chief schools of interpretation of them. They may be regarded from the point of view of science and secular philosophy, or from the point of view of Christianity. In either case the mind cannot but see in them, and the more as it becomes more perfectly acquainted with them, a manifestation of consistent order. That they are in one way or another the expression of order is a fundamental principle of all interpretation.

Science dealing principally with physical phenomena, and secular philosophy with conscious processes and historical results of human thought; science discovering and making progress towards unifying a system of inexorable laws of nature, and secular philosophy tracing the development of human thought and action towards the recognition and adoption of ultimate principles of speculation and behaviour;—science and secular philosophy alike have much to tell concerning the characteristics of the Power that manifests itself in nature.

Speaking in many different tones, and not always guiltless of confused and conflicting utterances, they consistently claim to be on the high road to some approximate discovery of the secret of the universe. The mysterious Power that regulates and animates phenomena reveals itself, they hold, more and more to the patient investigator, the persistent thinker; its operation, in the past and in the future, is becoming understood. And yet—such seems to be the general tenour of their teaching—it is a Power awful and sublime, worthy of man's fullest reverence and admiration; a Power so complex and so vast in its various manifestations as to give the amplest occupation, through coming ages, to man's highest faculties in his attempt to become acquainted with it. Than this Power, they say, we can recognize no higher, no more satisfying, no other God. We have, moreover—they go on to insist—in the ascertained or ascertainable methods of this Power, a virtual explanation of all past occurrences, and a sufficient guide to sound thought and moral action in the future.

To science and secular philosophy thus identifying revelation with discoveries and conclusions of human reason, discoveries and conclusions arrived at in the process of its investigation of the universe in which it has existence, Christianity makes answer in some such way as follows. All that you can by sound argument make good concerning God's manifestations of Himself in physical nature and in human life and thought I am in no wise disposed to question; rather, I am greatly beholden to you for placing me in possession of so considerable a body of systematized and illuminating knowledge. Further, I am by no means concerned to dispute the propriety, though I may plead the inconvenience, of calling this acquired knowledge of the universe a revelation of Him

whose work the universe is and on whom it day by day depends. Nor, again, do I at all join issue with you, when you affirm that in your reading of nature there is a clue to natural or moral conduct; that the mysterious Power which operates in us and around us is a Power which makes for righteousness, and that in following its guidance lies the way to such happiness as in the present life we may expect by our own efforts to achieve.

But—Christianity will go on to say—I do most steadfastly maintain that this is not the whole of revelation, that this is not man's only guide, and the full measure of his help, to fitting conduct. Most assuredly, in your interpretation of his position upon this earth, you are somewhat blind to two most important sets of facts of human history. The one set of facts consists of a vast body of united testimony that a revelation, other than a revelation through nature, has been given by the Supreme God. The other set of facts consists of a large mass of evidence from experience, that individual believers in this other revelation have, first, through conscious resistance to it made moral retrogression, and afterwards, through acceptance of it much more than recovered their former state. You, in denying the existence of any supernatural revelation, unduly depreciate the force of the evidence by which such a revelation is actually attested. It is unreasonable to ignore such a weight of testimony. Let me assure you that the progressive morality of a Christian land, in which you are content to see only steady development in following fully and intelligently the ways of nature, is in truth very far from being one long continuous ascent. It has, for those who have eyes to see, its manifest depths of sin, into which individuals sink who resist being guided and controlled otherwise than through recognition of natural propriety; and it has its conspicuous

heights of holiness, to which individuals rise who gladly welcome supernatural guidance and control. There is no natural explanation to be given of sin ; there is no natural explanation to be given of holiness. They result from God's revealing Himself to men otherwise than through the ways of nature ; and it is with supernatural revelation that I, Christianity, am especially and distinctively concerned.

The revelation, then, which in these chapters will be treated of is supernatural revelation. Christianity sees in the constitution of physical nature and of human character something more than an established set of orderly and Divine conditions, which man must learn to observe if he would attain to a high state of dignity and happiness. It sees in it a system exquisitely devised to be at once a theatre and an instrument for training men to a life of glad submission to the Will of the Creator. Christianity recognizes in sin something more than an ignorant and irremediable departure from the course of nature, and in holiness something more than a strict and admirable morality. It recognizes in sin a direct revolt against the Will of God, in holiness direct and sustained obedience to His Will. God has been pleased—so Christianity teaches—to bring the consciousness of men, from time to time, into immediate contact with His own Mind and Will. He has been pleased to make gradual revelations of Himself, otherwise than through the processes of His creation, and with a fulness and clearness which they cannot emulate, as the loving Father of mankind. He has been pleased to call upon men to yield Him unquestioning obedience as their Father, and to rely upon Him with full assurance that as a Father He will supply their needs. Supplementing His revelation of Himself in nature by supernatural revelation in the field of history, He

summons men to submit their wills to His ; and those who are obedient He leads by direct guidance and support to a participation, such as through natural morality could never be attained, in His own life of freedom and of love.

III. For thinkers whose consciousness is deeply imbued with the continuous and orderly manifestation of God in nature it is, no doubt, sometimes extremely difficult to admit the fact of a historical revelation that is supernatural. A supernatural event, they are apt to consider, even if it were possible for its occurrence to be established, could have no moral significance, inasmuch as it is a contravention of Divine order. And there are Christian apologists who essay to palliate or even to remove the difficulty by advancing the hypothesis, that recorded instances of such revelation may really be examples of laws yet undiscovered. Provided that the fact of Divine communications, which at present seem to transcend nature, is allowed, they are willing to abolish the common antithesis between the natural and the supernatural, merging them in the one idea of established law. But it cannot here be admitted that this is any part of Christian theology.

Thus, when Butler writes—"Nor is there any absurdity in supposing, that there may be beings in the universe, whose capacities, and knowledge, and views, may be so extensive, as that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural ; that is, analogous or conformable to God's dealings with other parts of His creation ; as natural as the visible known course of things appears to us"<sup>1</sup>—when he writes thus, his words, indeed, may be accepted, but his apparent meaning must be traversed. Truly there is no absurdity in supposing, that any instance of God's supernatural revelation of Himself to man—as

<sup>1</sup> Analogy of Religion, Part I., ch. I.

for example, the calling of Saul of Tarsus to become a minister of Christ's gospel—is a regular phenomenon, so to speak, of a supernatural world of settled order. If, however, this supposition is put forward as containing a satisfying explanation of the seeming irregularity of the revelation, regarded in its relation to the world of nature, it must be held to be, from a Christian point of view, unwarrantable. The hypothesis that God's dealings with mankind, other than those of which the course of nature is the medium, are altogether determined by principles of order similar to those which manifestly obtain in the visible creation, appears to be destructive of much of the special moral teaching of the Bible.

Nevertheless a thoughtful mind certainly seems to demand that in historical revelations there shall be some principle of order. It craves for an assurance that they are not merely the work of arbitrary and capricious will. And, apparently, the required principle is to be found in the conception of settled purpose. The principles of uniformity and continuity, embracing that part of nature's order which we shrink from contemplating as less than fundamental, are, so far as it is at all permissible for us to count upon them, limited in their scope to phenomenal causation. In settled purpose, the equivalent of final cause, we seem to have a superior expression of the Mind and Will of the Creator. It is, apparently, God's revealed purpose—the true final cause, that is, of human life upon the earth—so to deal with men as to win them to Himself; to bring them, through sin and suffering and repentance, to a happy state of glad conformity to and dependence upon His Will. And all His communications to mankind—those which are made in accordance with the subsidiary principles of natural order, and those which seem to be in some sort a contravention of that order—may be taken to



be in the highest degree subservient to the great end of the education and redemption of the human race.

But on the Will of God, regarded as Efficient Cause working out the loving purpose of His creation, and as choosing to reveal Himself, now to one person now to another, now in this manner now in that, we are seemingly entitled to conceive of no restriction whatsoever.

Some restriction, however, we may and must place upon the matter of His communications. Their moral purport must be so nearly akin to natural revelation, that their Divine origin may not be disputed ; and at the same time so much above it, that their supernaturalness may be admitted. Supernatural revelation calls upon man with a loftier and more imperious voice, than does natural revelation, to conform his life to moral principles ; it makes known to him in a far higher degree, than that for which there is any provision in the visible universe, the exceeding love of the Creator ; it invites him to a course concerning which the world of nature is absolutely silent—namely, the practising right conduct, not merely because it is in accordance with the constitution of things and a means to happiness, but because it is an act of direct submission to the Will of a holy and loving God. In the last of these three considerations we seem to have a vital distinction between the two kinds of revelation. And any apology for Christianity which would obliterate or disguise it must be pronounced, from a Christian point of view, unworthy and unsound.

IV. Revelation—by which term will henceforth be meant supernatural revelation—appears to be in general, if not always, capable of satisfying the tests implied in the following description of it. It is a pronouncement having relation to moral conduct, or conduct regulated in accordance with the action of the Power that manifests itself in

nature ; it is a new pronouncement, representing to the recipients truth which is otherwise beyond their immediate reach, but which is nevertheless recognizable as coming from the same source as the moral truth of which they are already in possession ; and it is a new pronouncement having for its chief end the winning of man's devotion to the Person of Him who is at once his Creator and his Moral Ideal. In revelation there is unfolded some new and intelligible trait of moral truth and beauty in Him who claims man's homage and obedience, or there is some new and clear call upon mankind to sacrifice to God its own self-will.

Revelation, or Christian doctrine, may be said to be all contained, explicitly or implicitly, in the collection of books which we call the Bible. But Christianity does not by any means maintain that every utterance of the Bible is the word of God. In the first place, all records that are obviously unconnected with moral truth may be summarily set aside by one who inquires what it is that the Bible and the Church put before him as Divinely revealed. In the second place, whatever secular statements can be dissociated from a moral truth, which they have been instrumental in conveying, may properly be dissociated. Thus the moral truth of God's gradual creation of the world may be believed, even though the scientific details of the process should be held to be untrustworthy ; and a revelation of moral truth may be discerned in the story of Balaam, even though his ass's speaking be discredited. And in the third place, an inquirer may be assured that any moral position which is to him repugnant, or even only hopelessly obscure, is not a position which he is at present asked to look upon as a truth of revelation.

It is not, let it be explained, for one moment admitted that the moral teaching of the Bible, properly interpreted

and understood, is in any way imperfect. But undoubtedly there are difficulties connected with it. These difficulties seem chiefly to arise from three sources ; first, the reader's state of moral development being more advanced than that of the persons to whom some particular revelation was originally made ; secondly, his moral nature being still too undisciplined to appreciate the self-abnegation of religion ; and thirdly, his being misled by immature or otherwise faulty expositions of Christian doctrine. He may see, for instance—until he is better informed—in Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, not so much an act of sublime self-surrender, on the part of an ignorant man, to the Will of God, as an intended exhibition of idolatrous worship and inhuman bloodshed. He may for a while fail to appreciate the superiority of the character of Jacob over that of Esau, or to admire the meekness and humility enjoined by Christ. He may be hurt by the doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, because he has not yet learned to distinguish the pure Scriptural presentation of it from the account given by expositors deficient in comprehension of the justice and the love of God.

Revelation, imparted to individual men to deliver to and impress upon their fellows, necessarily becomes mingled, in the form of its expression, with some alloy of human imperfection. Revelation is of moral truth, and it is plainly represented in the New Testament as finding its way from mind to mind in great measure through the instrumentality of preaching. The prophet or evangelist or private member of the Church, to whom the message is entrusted, is not content with assenting to it and passing it on in the fewest words. He believes it, and he testifies of it as a thing believed. He receives it into the body of impressions of moral truth in accordance with which con-

duct is determined ; and he gives it a form in his own thought enabling it to harmonize with other beliefs already established in the mind. And when he brings it forth, in order to speak of it to his fellow-men, he brings it forth shaped and clothed in a manner determined by the conditions of his own individual consciousness. A moral truth expounded and enforced is necessarily wrapped up in words which in some measure reflect the character and the intelligence of the particular witness to it. And while a thoroughly sympathetic hearer will accept the truth without question in the form in which it is offered to him, a hearer who in point of character or intelligence is at all widely separated from the witness may have difficulty in giving credence to the truth in consequence of the seemingly erroneous expression in which it is disguised. Moral truths, let us never forget, disseminated through the agency and co-operation of believers in them, need to be from time to time re-set and explained afresh, if they are to secure a proper hold upon the progressive consciousness of men.

V. We have now to consider the kind of evidence by means of which revelation is diffused. It is not intended to speak here of the reception of it by individuals to whom it is originally made. Nor is it necessary to do more than touch upon the subject of Divine aid enabling persons to receive it indirectly. There is ground for thinking, very especially in the case of loyal members of the Christian Church, that man's acceptance of truths that have been revealed is in some measure due to the mind receiving from God the power to apprehend. But it is also very clear that Scripture represents belief in Christian doctrine as belief based upon sufficient evidence. Whatever special illumination may be afforded to the mind of the inquirer, it is, at least mainly, an illumination which enables him to

appreciate evidence that is put before him. The convert's belief in revelation is the act of a reasonable man, of a man whose mind, having already knowledge of God, makes sound inferences in the field of history, even though he may be far from able to give a philosophical account of the inferential process. Whether the mind reasons explicitly or implicitly, consciously or unconsciously, it arrives at its conclusions according to a certain method, namely, the method of illation. The exemplification of this method in the reception of revealed truth it now lies before us to consider.

An essential characteristic of the evidence on which faith is built is, that it is twofold—the evidence of testimony, and the evidence of circumstance. It is thus historical evidence of a strong kind. This strength of evidence, be it observed, springs from the very necessity of the case. Neither testimony alone nor circumstance alone can, in the nature of things, establish revelation in a reasonable mind. The evidence which must be relied on for the propagation of Christian doctrine, the evidence by which it has been and only could have been propagated in the past as an elevating and transforming rule of life, is evidence of a kind which has no cause to shrink from the scrutiny of the keenest criticism.

Testimony alone, however strong, is not sufficient to induce a genuine belief in revelation. For revelation unfolds some new moral truth designed to have practical effect in drawing men nearer to God. A person may indeed assent to doctrine on the authority of others, he may even go so far as to adopt some rule of life required by the doctrine ; but, unless it commends itself to him on some intrinsic ground, he is no recipient of revelation, his moral life is on no diviner plane than it was before. A bigot is not a reasonable believer ; nor, in so far as he is a

bigot, is he a person of any appreciable use in the dissemination of true religion.

Circumstance also, however full, is unequal to the task of effecting rational adhesion to a progressive supernatural philosophy. For doctrine reached by circumstantial evidence, without the aid of testimony, must be doctrine which is a product of human reason, standing in no relation of dependence to new moral revelation. The mystic who, having some knowledge of God, builds up for himself on this knowledge a religious system has no reasonable assurance that his speculative view of Divine things is the view taken by God Himself. He has no reasonable assurance that in framing his life, if he does attempt to frame it, in accordance with his system he is conforming his will to the Will of God.

"Jews," we are told by St. Paul in reference to the reception given to his teaching, "ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom" (1 Cor. i. 22). By this we may apparently understand, that the one set of hearers demanded indubitable testimony, the other conditioned for very much clearer and more explicit argument. To the one set Christianity was a stumbling-block, to the other foolishness; and they both fancied that they were invited to let themselves be persuaded of its truth on wholly insufficient grounds. Their difficulty, however, was not one that either required to be met or could be met. It indicated no reasonable appreciation of the proper grounds of belief in the gospel message, but only that they were not in a state of readiness for accepting it. No testimony, operating alone, could make the Jew, no perception of philosophical fitness, operating alone, could make the Greek, an intelligent disciple of Jesus Christ. Nor, apparently, could any addition to the combination, such as we have it, of testimony and circumstance make it for practical purposes

more effective than it is. The joint evidence, of testimony perhaps a little less than perfect, and of circumstance not in itself entirely convincing, appears to be amply sufficient for the needs of those who are in a position to appreciate its reasonable force.

VI. It will now be useful to consider briefly J. H. Newman's treatment of faith in his well-known *Oxford University Sermons*. Up to a certain point he presents forcibly and clearly the nature of the mental operation of assenting to revelation ; but he fails to exhibit it as in all respects a genuine mode of reasoning. One cause of this failure appears to be, that he notes no distinction between the assent of justifying faith and the assent derived from attachment to the risen Christ. "It is the new life," he writes in one place, "and not the natural reason, which leads the soul to Christ"; and presently, after quoting from the first Epistle of St. John, he remarks, "Surely the faculty by which we know the Truth is here represented to us, not as a power of investigation, but as a moral perception."<sup>1</sup>

Generally, however, he treats of faith as a process of reasoning, but yet as a process which, while it is wholly justifiable, is only partly explicable. He declines to identify it, beyond a certain point, with intelligible operations of the mind. And here we must decidedly differ from him. Though its conclusions, he holds, must accord with those of reason, yet they need not spring from reason as their source. "When the Gospel is said to require a rational Faith, this need not mean more than that Faith is accordant to right Reason in the abstract, not that it results from it in the particular case."<sup>2</sup> "True Faith admits, but does not require, the exercise of what is commonly understood by Reason."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sermon xii.

<sup>2</sup> Sermon x.

<sup>3</sup> Sermon xiii.

Rightly he insists on the very important point, that there is a reasoning which is implicit, as well as a reasoning which is explicit, and that in implicit reasoning manifold considerations may influence the mind which it is impossible for it to express in words. "Here," he writes, "are two processes, distinct from each other,—the original process of reasoning, and next, the process of investigating our reasonings. All men reason, for to reason is nothing more than to gain truth from former truth, without the intervention of sense, to which brutes are limited; but all men do not reflect upon their own reasonings, much less reflect truly and accurately, so as to do justice to their own meaning; but only in proportion to their abilities and attainments. In other words, all men have a reason, but not all men can give a reason. We may denote, then, these two exercises of mind as reasoning and arguing, or as conscious and unconscious reasoning, or as Implicit Reason and Explicit Reason. . . . That these two exercises are not to be confounded together would seem too plain for remark, except that they have been confounded. Clearness in argument certainly is not indispensable to reasoning well. Accuracy in stating doctrines or principles is not essential to feeling and acting upon them. The exercise of analysis is not necessary to the integrity of the process analyzed. The process of reasoning is complete in itself, and independent. The analysis is but an account of it; it does not make the conclusion correct; it does not make the inference rational. It does not cause a given individual to reason better. It does but give him a sustained consciousness, for good or for evil, that he is reasoning. How a man reasons is as much a mystery, as how he remembers."<sup>1</sup>

"No analysis," he further says, "is subtle and delicate

<sup>1</sup> Sermon xiii.



enough to represent adequately the state of mind under which we believe, or the subjects of belief, as they are presented to our thoughts. . . . Is it not hopeless to expect that the most diligent and anxious investigation can end in more than in giving some very rude description of the living mind, and its feelings, thoughts, and reasonings?"<sup>1</sup>

He is right, too, in so far as he maintains that faith is in very great measure of the nature of implicit, rather than of explicit reason. "Men may argue badly, but they reason well; that is, their professed grounds are no sufficient measures of their real ones. And in like manner, though the evidence with which Faith is content is apparently inadequate to its purpose, yet this is no proof of real weakness or imperfection in its reasoning. It seems to be contrary to reason, yet is not; it is but independent of and distinct from what are called philosophical inquiries, intellectual systems, courses of argument, and the like."<sup>2</sup> "Faith is a process of the Reason, in which so much of the grounds of inference cannot be exhibited, so much lies in the character of the mind itself, in its general view of things, its estimate of the probable and the improbable, its impressions concerning God's will, and its anticipations derived from its own inbred wishes, that it will ever seem to the world irrational and despicable;—till, that is, the event confirms it. The act of mind, for instance, by which an unlearned person savingly believes the Gospel, on the word of his teacher, may be analogous to the exercise of sagacity in a great statesman or general, supernatural grace doing for the uncultivated reason what genius does for them."<sup>3</sup>

But, in so far as he contends, as in the foregoing passages he apparently does contend, that faith is synonymous with the implicit process, to the exclusion of all synonymity

<sup>1</sup> Sermon xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Sermon xi.

<sup>3</sup> Sermon xi.

with the explicit process, we must certainly join issue with him. For the fact appears to be that the two processes are, as inferential operations, essentially identical. Both are conducted according to the method of illation. The explicit process is but the implicit process expressed in words; the implicit process is no other than the explicit process carried on more or less unconsciously. It may indeed be the case, that faith sometimes reaches its conclusions without the employment of explicit argument, and that it never reaches them except in dependence upon some amount of implicit reasoning. But it cannot be at all admitted that this difference in practical importance between the two processes constitutes any essential difference in kind.

There is, however, the difference between them which is a difference in respect of the facts or considerations of which they make use. The mind can seldom, or never, exactly express in words its real apprehension of the grounds of its conclusions. Concerning the kind of circumstance or consideration of which faith in its implicit reasoning commonly makes use, Newman writes as follows: "The Word of Life is offered to a man; and, on its being offered, he has Faith in it. Why? On these two grounds,—the word of its human messenger, and the likelihood of the message. And why does he feel the message to be probable? Because he has a love for it, his love being strong, though the testimony is weak. He has a keen sense of the intrinsic excellence of the message, of its desirableness, of its likeness to what it seems to him Divine Goodness would vouchsafe did He vouchsafe any, of the need of a Revelation, and its probability. Thus Faith is the reasoning of a religious mind, or of what Scripture calls a right or renewed heart, which acts upon presumptions rather than evidence, which speculates

and ventures on the future when it cannot make sure of it.”<sup>1</sup>

The contrast here implied between presumption and evidence must be protested against. Presumption is neither more nor less than a *priori* evidence of circumstance. Nevertheless Newman does well to urge, here and elsewhere, the distinction between presumption or a *priori* evidence, which the mind chiefly notes when it reasons implicitly, and a *posteriori* evidence, on which it is almost necessarily more inclined to dwell when it expresses its arguments in words. The difference, however, it must be maintained, in its choice of facts or considerations implies no essential difference whatever in the use it makes of them.

Illation fully carried out involves, as we know, the recognition of a cause or combination of causes which might, according to our past experience of sequences of concrete phenomena, give rise to the phenomenon inferred or to be proved, and the recognition of an effect or combination of effects which might, likewise according to experience, issue from it. Recognition of causes is reasoning a *priori*, recognition of effects is reasoning a *posteriori*. And the recognition of causes appears to be, in the nature of things, oftentimes much more facile than the recognition of effects, and at the same time much less capable of being set forth in speech. In other words, antecedent probability, oftentimes far more operative than consequential probability in helping to produce conviction, naturally belongs to implicit rather than to explicit reasoning. The recognition of cause and of effect, and the disposition of the mind to reason from the former implicitly and from the latter explicitly, are both exemplified in the grounds we commonly enough assign for giving credence

<sup>1</sup> Sermon xi.

to individual human testimony. We somehow feel assured, we say, from our general estimate of the character of a particular witness, that in all probability he speaks the truth: we definitely point to manner, tone, consistencies of statement, in order to persuade others that his testimony may be believed.

Faith, then, let us understand, in its aspect of belief, is reason acting by the method of illation; it is reason acting in great measure implicitly rather than explicitly; and it is reason acting in great measure on *a priori* rather than on *a posteriori* grounds. The mind, when acting implicitly on *a priori* grounds, no less than when acting explicitly on *a posteriori* grounds, proceeds according to the rational method of illative inference.

A further quotation from Newman, containing a warning of the inadequacy of precise argument to express and convey the real grounds of belief in particular instances of revelation, will form an appropriate conclusion to this chapter. He writes as follows:—

“We speak of an accused person being guilty without any doubt, even though the evidences of his guilt are none of them broad and definite enough in themselves to admit of being forced upon the notice of those who will not exert themselves to see them.

“Now, should the proof of Christianity, or the Scripture proof of its doctrines, be of this subtle nature, of course it cannot be exhibited to advantage in argument: and even if it be not such, but contain strong and almost legal evidences, still there will always be a temptation in the case of writers on Evidence, or on the Scripture proof of doctrine, to over-state and exaggerate, or to systematize in excess; as if they were making a case in a court of law, rather than simply and severely analyzing, as far as is possible, certain existing reasons why the Gospel is

true, or why it should be considered of a certain doctrinal character. It is hardly too much to say, that almost all reasons formally adduced in moral inquiries, are rather specimens and symbols of the real grounds, than those grounds themselves. They do but approximate to a representation of the general character of the proof which the writer wishes to convey to another's mind. They cannot, like mathematical proof, be passively followed with an attention confined to what is stated, and with the admission of nothing but what is urged. Rather, they are hints towards, and samples of, the true reasoning, and demand an active, ready, candid, and docile mind, which can throw itself into what is said, neglect verbal difficulties, and pursue and carry out principles."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sermon xiii.

## CHAPTER III.

### RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

I. UNDERSTANDING that belief in revelation, or religious belief, presupposes belief in God as the Creator and Moral Ruler of the world ; that it has as its object certain undemonstrable allegations concerning moral communications of God to man ; that, regarded as a mental activity, it is the normal operation of reason establishing facts, by the method of illation, in the field of history ; that to a large extent its action is implicit, and the entire basis of it cannot possibly be expressed in words ;—understanding all this, let us, from a philosophical point of view, consider the reasonable grounds of belief in some of the leading doctrines of the Bible.

It does not, let it be again explained, belong to the purpose of this chapter to attempt any approximation to a full presentation of the evidence in favour of Christian tenets. Not the cogency, so much as the general nature, of the arguments upon which belief is based is what it is intended to set forth. It is desired to exhibit the evidence in such a way as to make it sufficiently clear, that religious belief is no unreasonable mode of consciousness.

(a) Let us take as our first instance of revelation the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. Why is it reasonable, or at least not unreasonable, for us in the present day to believe that God commanded Abraham to slay his son ?

What, let us consider, is the enduring moral significance of the story? Let us picture to ourselves Abraham, a loyal worshipper of God, but sprung from a family of idolaters and now living among a people accustomed to offer up human sacrifices. He is reverent and obedient, but he is ignorant. He is grateful to God for giving him a son in his old age, a son through whom he already has confident expectation of being the founder of a mighty nation. He is naturally anxious to testify his gratitude by some signal act of self-surrender. It occurs to him that his well-loved son, in whom his highest hopes are centred, is the most precious treasure of which he can divest himself. The suspicion that loyalty to God demands of him the surrender of his son in sacrifice then enters his mind. For the notion of human sacrifices, as offerings possible on the part of loving parents and acceptable to the gods in whose honour they are made, has been made familiar to him by the practices of the idolatrous people among whom he dwells. Self-denyingly he therefore asks himself, Can I not surrender as much as they? ignorantly he therefore questions, Will this sacrifice be acceptable to my God?

And God tells him that He does require of him this supremest act of self-surrender. The command to slay is a revelation of the Will of God asking for the completest submission of the will of man. Submission made, Abraham learns, as we gather from the Epistle to the Hebrews, to look upon the coming sacrifice in another light. He becomes possessed of a glad hope that God will not, after all, suffer His promises to fail; that Isaac, in whom he is to be so greatly blessed, will somehow be restored to him. First his obedience, and afterwards his trust in God, was proved.

To persons having a lively apprehension of God as the Moral Ruler of mankind there need be nothing strange in

the moral aspect of this story of revelation. Rather, it accords with, it confirms, it throws light upon, the action of our own nature. There is in it altogether, for us in the present day, no small amount of antecedent probability. First, that occasion might well arise for a particular revelation of God's Will in connection with a contemplated sacrifice of Isaac, seems far from being unlikely. Secondly, if Abraham did proceed to offer up the son of his old age, the son to whom alone he looked for bringing him renown in the time to come, it can scarcely have been under the influence of any less cogent motive than an authoritative and imperative disposition to obey a clearly revealed command of God. The act is not otherwise explicable as the act of a reasonable person. And thirdly, that God should require from Abraham such an utter sacrifice, seems to be very much consistent with the inward experience of many who try to serve Him faithfully.

We seem, then, to have in ample measure the *a priori* evidence, or antecedent probability, required for intelligent acquiescence in the truth of revelation. For the *a posteriori* evidence, or consequential probability, we may look to the narrative that has been handed down to us, that is, to testimony and tradition; and we may look also to the familiar history of the Jewish nation, that is, to evidence of circumstance. That an alleged event should be gravely and reverently recorded, and that the record should be cherished and believed by many successive generations of God-fearing men, is solid testimonial evidence that the event in question did actually occur. And the protected fortunes of Abraham's descendants, culminating in the entry into the world of the unique Personality of Jesus Christ, are no slight corroboration of testimony and tradition. They may well be considered to be explicable by referring them to some historic scene, in which



Abraham's rare completeness of submission to God's Will marks his fitness for being the progenitor of a chosen people.

(*b*) Let us next turn our attention to our Lord's declaration of a future judgment. The doctrine is, or appears to be, chiefly this :—that in a future life men will enjoy reward or suffer penalty accordingly as, while they are still upon the earth, they are obedient or disobedient to the Will of God revealed through Christ.

As in this case the evidence of testimony must be held to be much more important than that of circumstance, it may be noticed first. It constitutes our requisite consequential probability, and is certainly very strong. The character of our Lord, as consistently delineated in the Gospels, being what it is, and the knowledge and care and reverence manifested in their composition being what they are, it seems scarcely possible that He should be reported in them as offering moral information about God which is not true. The recorded announcement of a future judgment can scarcely, in reason, be otherwise accounted for than by ascribing its origin to the reality of a future judgment as a fact of the Divine government of mankind.

For antecedent probability we have the witness of consciousness ; we have also some experience of a natural system of rewards and punishments imperfectly carried out. We know that obedience to the Will of God, when it is the Voice of Conscience that gives expression to His Will, is often followed by a sense of peace ; and we know that disobedience is often followed by a sense of sin, a sense, that is, of painful isolation and of guilt that merits suffering. Further, we apprehend that in God's natural government of the world—government, that is, according to obvious principles of settled order—there is some sort of prophecy of the happiness of a future state being dependent upon

present conformity to His Will. For we are aware that virtue, which is conduct of the kind that revelation tells us He approves, is plainly distinguishable from vice, which is conduct of the kind that revelation tells us He condemns, in respect of the far happier consequences that may reasonably be expected to follow from it. This is made known to us by an innate perception of a natural connection between order and happiness, and disorder and unhappiness, as well as by intelligent observation of the actual course of events.

But—let it be carefully observed—the antecedent probability is scarcely or not all, that, because our virtues and our vices are in some respects deservedly dealt with in this present world, they will in these same respects be further rewarded and punished in the world to come. The probability, such as it is, of their meeting with future reward and punishment arises mainly, if not entirely, from the circumstance that they are not now altogether dealt with according to desert. We seem to know that happiness and misery, though they may be long delayed, are respectively the ordained consequences of virtuous and vicious conduct ; and yet we seem to find that in vast numbers of cases they are inadequately meted out. Hence we derive some natural expectation that the present imperfection of God's perceived moral government of the world will be rectified hereafter, that in a future state the vindication of Divine justice will be completed.

(c) The doctrine of God's answering prayer may now be selected for consideration. Its antecedent probability arises from such apprehension as we have of the Fatherhood of God. Known to us as Creator and Moral Ruler, He is our Father in that our existence is derived from Him, to Him we naturally look up for guidance, His claim to our obedience we cannot but acknowledge.

Revealing Himself to us as a God of love, we see in Him another Fatherly attribute, which binds us more closely to Him, and makes it likely that if we should pray to Him He would hearken to us.

For consequential probability we have, as in the preceding case, the recorded testimony of Jesus Christ. We have also evidence of circumstance that arises from time to time in the experience of those who pray. Not always indeed, but sometimes, we are privileged to behold a verification of God's promise. An act of prayer, and a subsequent event, whether of our outer or of our inner life, are sometimes so intimately associated in the consciousness, that we cannot but regard the event as a genuine answer to the prayer. The more experienced a believer is, the more, perhaps, is he experimentally confident that he does not pray in vain. There is no occasion to enter here into the question of the ways in which prayer is answered. It suffices to point out that the Christian has good ground, in antecedent and consequential probability, for believing that God does somehow answer all prayer that is offered to Him in a Christian spirit.

II. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the completion of God's revelation of Himself in human form, may be fitly spoken of as a fundamental tenet of Scriptural Christianity : with it a main part of Christian doctrine stands or falls. Still more fitly may it be spoken of as a source of Christianity. For not only is it the origin of a considerable body of Christian doctrine, but it is, or is held to be, an indispensable well-spring of the Christian life. From it and belief in it first sprang the Church ; through it and belief in it the world is gradually becoming Christianized ; without it and belief in it—so Scripture and Christian experience seem to teach—Christian morality must die. And, such being the importance of the tenet, it

behoves us to examine the truth of it with no little care.

The alleged historical fact of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, understood to include His ascension into heaven, is not to be confounded with an ordinary miracle. It is comparable only to such epochal manifestations of creative energy as the first appearance of human life upon the earth. The doctrine of the Resurrection is not that Jesus, like Lazarus, was miraculously restored to life, only once more to fall a natural victim to death's power. It is that He triumphed over death. It is that He rescued His body from corruption. It is that in glorified human form He now lives and works, guarding and building up His Church on earth. It is that in and through the Person of Jesus Christ a new life-giving force permanently entered the domain of human effort. It is that by virtue of this force Jesus became the Originator of a new creation.

In favour of the truth of the alleged event we have the usual two kinds of evidence required for the establishment of historical revelation, namely, antecedent probability, and consequential probability derived from testimony; and we have, in addition, consequential evidence of circumstance. It will be convenient to consider the three in the order given.

(1) For us in the present day, as for the immediate followers of Jesus, the antecedent probability is perhaps not strong. What we may now take to be clear intimations of His coming Resurrection, in the Jewish Scriptures and in reported sayings of His own, have become clear only in the light of the seemingly accomplished fact. And the same thing may perhaps be said of any anticipations we might form of a triumph over death in consequence of a study of the general records of His words and works. We might, if we had no consequential evidence to help

conviction, fail to so separate Him from other men as to speculate on the possibility of His exemption from natural decay. We might—as was the case with the disciples—while recognizing Him as in some way a unique and Divine Messenger from God, fail to account Him so Divine as to have it always in His power to master death. And yet it can by no means be said that there is in the Gospel records an absence of antecedent probability. For it would be difficult to understand so uniquely glorious a life being, to all appearance, prematurely if not even purposelessly thrown away, and after a brief meteoric appearance sinking in failure into the darkness of the grave. It would be difficult, too, to account for the birth into the world of so sublime a Character, if His end was only to be that of other men. The Personality of our Lord, as it is depicted in the Gospels, must, we may take it, be depicted with substantial truth, if only because it could not have been invented. And it is accordant, rather than discordant, with the representation given, that the Subject of it should not, like humanity in general, after death see corruption.

(2) As regards testimony let us, for the sake of brevity and clearness, confine our attention to that of St. John, St. Peter, and St. Paul.

St. John's story appears to be substantially as follows:—He hears on the morning of the third day from the crucifixion, from one of the women who went to the tomb to take part in the completion of the burial, that the body of Jesus has by some one been removed. As quickly as possible he, with Peter, runs to the sepulchre, and having reached it waits outside until Peter brings him word that the body is certainly no longer there, and that there are signs, not of its having been snatched away in haste, but of an orderly and deliberate departure. He then, entering

in and seeing this consequential evidence, and realizing at the same time an antecedent probability derived partly from remembered words of Jesus, comes to the conclusion that He has mysteriously risen from the dead. His appreciation of Jesus, based on close personal intercourse with Him, is sufficient to enable him, with the help of slight consequential evidence, to infer the Resurrection; though he has not yet learned, as afterwards he does learn, that Jesus is the Son of God, and therefore must necessarily leave the grave. He does not yet know anything of the form and of the power of the Resurrection. This is matter of special revelation made to the ten disciples on the evening of the same day. Jesus suddenly stands in the midst, in His own human form, His form marred as in the hour of His death and yet transfigured and glorified. And now, by breathing upon them, He begins the work of renewing men's lives and building up His Church by the infusion of His Spirit. St. John, himself entirely convinced, testifies, he tells us, of this and another appearance in order that his readers, too, may believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and believing may have life in His name. His testimony is that of an intelligent eye-witness giving explanatory evidence. He tells how he quickly perceived that Jesus had somehow triumphed over death, how he then actually saw and heard Him in His changed condition, and how he was admitted to a share in the redemptive purpose of His Lord's continued assumption of human form.

St. Peter, not quite so ready as St. John to recognize the antecedent probability of the Resurrection, afterwards speaks clearly and strongly in maintenance of it as an event of history. In his address on the Day of Pentecost he insists on the impossibility of Christ's remaining in the grave; and he teaches that the Resurrection had a purpose

foreordained by God, namely, the rescue of the world from sin. In the same speech he points to the manifest descent of the Holy Spirit, as consequential evidence of Christ's Ascension into heaven; and he gives here and elsewhere his own personal testimony to the fact of the Resurrection. He himself knows, as he tells Cornelius and his friends, knows from having eaten and drunk with Jesus after He rose from the dead, that the bodily Resurrection of the Saviour is indeed a veritable fact. He does not, however, ask his hearers to accept it as such merely on his word. He represents, both to his audience, on the Day of Pentecost and to the company assembled by Cornelius, its antecedent probability, probability derived from the Personality of Jesus and from God's gracious purpose of effecting through Him the redemption of the world.

St. Paul tells us plainly that he had seen and heard the risen Christ by means of special revelation made from heaven. The reality of the revelation was confirmed for himself by the ministrations of Ananias. And, if we may judge from his address in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia, it was his habit to refer his audiences, for confirmation of his own testimony to the Resurrection, to the testimony borne by persons who had seen upon earth the risen Lord, and also to the same antecedent probability as that depicted by St. Peter.

In reference to the weight of this combined testimony several points require to be noticed. First, it appears to be the testimony of soberly and soundly thinking men, who realized the difference between a vision, or a representation of a thing that might be, and a revelation, or a presentation of a thing that is. They are careful to show how what they took to be the direct evidence of sense was supplemented by other considerations. Secondly, they do

not anticipate that they will win the conviction of other persons by a mere recital of the evidence which satisfied them. They exhibit to their hearers what they now perceive to be the strong antecedent probability of the fact to which they testify. Thirdly, they are independent witnesses, all testifying in their different ways to the same grand thesis—that Jesus Christ permanently lives in human form in order to redeem the world from sin.

There are, or have been, persons who profess themselves indisposed to accept the apostles' testimony, because they cannot subject them to cross-examination. But such persons appear to misapprehend the true and reasonable nature of the historical evidence of revelation. They appear, in the first place, to lay exaggerated stress on the importance of testimony; and in the second place, to depreciate unduly the force of such testimony as lies within our reach. Unless testimony is offered as the sole evidence of revelation, and the testimony offered is that of a single witness, there is no occasion, in reason, to demand that it shall be full and without a flaw. And in the case before us neither part of the hypothesis is fact. For there is, to supplement testimony, both antecedent and consequential evidence of circumstance; the latter having yet to be considered. And the testimony in our hands is not limited to that of a single individual: we have the combined testimony of at least three confident and independent witnesses, who, while showing how they themselves became convinced of the event which they proclaimed, abstained from insisting too exclusively on the value, for other men, of their own experience. It may, then, be granted without prejudice to the historical proof of the Resurrection, that the testimony, as it has come down to us, of no one witness is in itself convincing. The unsupported declarations of individuals are not what



the Church relies on as sufficient evidence of the great event.

Nevertheless too much must not be conceded to those who would call in question the value of the apostolic testimony. There is, for what it lacks in graphic and full consistency of detail in consequence of our being now unable to cross-examine, ample compensation in the authority of persons who came face to face with the apostles, and who must in reason be supposed, at least in many cases, to have thoroughly questioned those who were seeking to convert them. It may be said to be certain, that the Resurrection was the essential doctrine upon which the Church was founded ; that it continued to be a matter of common belief among Christian converts ; and that so strong in the minds of many was their conviction of its truth, that it led them to adopt new principles of life and brave severest persecution. If, then, to the recorded witness of the apostles we add the authority of the early Church, we have a body of testimony which must reasonably be accounted extremely strong.

(3) If, to believers in God's moral government of the world, antecedent probability and apostolic testimony should seem insufficient to establish historically the truth of the Resurrection, there is still, to supplement them, consequential evidence of circumstance. The new life-giving force which Jesus Christ brought into the world, and by the power of which He escaped the corruption of the grave, is now operative in man's moral nature. Some measure of it—so Christians hold—is continuously imparted by Him to every loyal member of the Church. This it is, they say, which enables the Christian, who does not forget to watch and pray, to battle successfully with strong temptation ; this it is to which he owes the ability to overcome self-will ; this it is which alone can make it

possible to reach great heights of purity and love. Christianity, admitting that its adherents have much cause to be ashamed of the little that has been done in comparison with what might have been done, nevertheless maintains with the utmost confidence, that the world is gradually being regenerated through the power of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We now leave for the present, to return to it again in another chapter, the question of the Resurrection as an established fact of history. Seen from the standpoint of belief in God's moral government of the world, and regarded not only part by part but as a systematic whole, the evidence in its favour, the leading features of which have been set forth, is without doubt of very great cogency. There are many minds which perhaps can scarcely conceive of, and which most certainly do not require, any addition to its force. Nevertheless there are persons whom it has no power to convince, and who are disposed to ascribe this want of power to its own inherent imperfection. Among the objectors to the Resurrection are to be found some of the keenest intellects of the age; and it is a matter of no small importance that the real ground and the value of their objections should be distinctly set forth. The substance of them is that the evidence before us does not, or cannot, prove a miracle. An endeavour will presently be made to exhibit and to meet this difficulty.

III. The conditions of religious belief, regarded as an intellectual activity, having been examined, it remains for us to consider it in its aspect of a moral product. For that, in the view of the writers of the New Testament, it has a moral as well as an intellectual basis is beyond question. In a consideration of the assumption that has been made—that it presupposes belief in God as the

active Moral Ruler of mankind, a Ruler seeking to win men to submission to His Will—we shall, apparently, find an explanation of its moral worth. How is it, we have to inquire, that the necessary recognition of God dwells not in the consciousness of all?

Here we must make the additional assumption spoken of early in the preceding chapter. We must assume that each man who recognizes in the existence of God a fundamental moral truth does so in consequence of a revelation made to him personally. We must assume that Conscience, or the Voice of God bidding him render obedience to His Will, is quite distinct from the sense of order or moral sense, that is, the innate activity of consciousness which points out what is natural and reasonable to be done. This assumption, which will be justified in a subsequent chapter, at once narrows the class of persons, with whose attitude towards revelation we have to deal, to those to whom it has pleased God to reveal Himself by Conscience. It must be held, however, that in Christian countries there are comparatively few who may not be included in this class.

Why is it, then, that so many persons make no profession whatever of belief in God, and so many others, while professing to believe in Him, reject the notion of particular supernatural revelations? And why is it that disbelief in them is represented in Scripture as being—not indeed for us as judges, but in the eyes of our Lord and Master—matter for moral condemnation?

The common or single answer to these questions seems to be, that disbelief is to a large extent a manifestation and a consequence of disobedient or unsubmitive will. Partly no doubt—and herein it is of very different moral quality—it arises from a mistaken impression, due to the spread in modern days of physical inquiry, that no fact

of history can reasonably be received as true unless it can be more or less clearly demonstrated by one man to another.

"The more strongly we insist," writes the late Professor Green in his essay on faith, "that faith is a personal and conscious relation of the man to God, forming the principle of a new life, not perhaps observable by others, but which the man's own conscience recognizes, the more awkward becomes its dependence on events believed to have happened in the past. The evidence for their having happened may be exceedingly cogent, but at any rate the appreciation of it depends on processes of reasoning which it would be a moral paradox to deny that a man may perform correctly without being the better, and incorrectly without being the worse. . . . Neither if we believe certain documents to be genuine and authentic can we be the better, nor if we believe it not, the worse. There is thus an inner contradiction in that conception of faith which makes it a state of mind involving peace with God and love towards all men, and at the same time makes its object that historical work of Christ, of which our knowledge depends on evidence of uncertain origin and value."

There are, let it be observed, two distinct points in the relation that subsists between moral goodness and religious belief. In the above passage they seem to be confused. Belief may be a consequence of goodness, or it may be a cause of further goodness. It is with it in its aspect of consequence that we are now concerned. It has to be shown how recognition of a man's moral worth may properly be made dependent upon his acceptance of events alleged to have happened in the past; how it may, without moral paradox, be maintained that the man who believes has already in his character an element of goodness that is, in general, wanting in him who disbelieves.

All revelation has for its object moral practice, advanced moral practice in obedience to God's Will. The God who reveals Himself is a God who makes Himself known to us—as first in Conscience, so afterwards in other particular revelations—as a Ruler who calls upon us to bring our conduct into more complete conformity with His law, and especially to recognize His paramount claim to our obedience. Persons who steadily revolt against the moral law, so far as it is known to them, persons who have no wish for moral illumination, who rather avert their attention from moral truth and shrink from allowing it to obtain an entrance into their minds—these do not continue to be troubled with a consciousness of God's controlling Voice. Apparently, either He withdraws from them His revelation of Himself, or their mind and will become incapable of recognizing it. And persons on a higher moral plane than these, persons who, without repudiating the law of God, are nevertheless resolutely indisposed to submit their wills to His, similarly lose consciousness of revelations of Himself made for the special purpose of disciplining the will. They cease to have conscious knowledge, and expectation of knowledge, of God other than that which reaches them through natural channels. They see no antecedent probability, rather they see antecedent improbability, in the alleged supernatural occurrences of the Bible. Relatively therefore to Christian doctrine they become revelation-blind.

This explanation, let it be remarked, implies the hypothesis of a real freedom of the human will. To the vindication of the hypothesis a separate chapter will presently be devoted.

IV. One more point calls for notice, namely, the relation of belief and of disbelief to the search for truth. Alike on

behalf of those who believe, and on behalf of those who disbelieve supernatural revelation, the claim is made that they are the real seekers after truth. On the one hand, we find St. John recording the saying of our Lord, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John xviii. 37); and himself declaring, "He that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John iv. 6). On the other hand, the late Professor Huxley writes as follows: "Theological apologists who insist that morality will vanish if their dogmas are exploded, would do well to consider the fact that, in the matter of intellectual veracity, science is already a long way ahead of the Churches; and that, in this particular, it is exerting an educational influence on mankind of which the Churches have shown themselves utterly incapable."<sup>1</sup>

In explanation of the words recorded and spoken by St. John it may be pointed out, that he who deserves to be called, in the highest sense, a seeker after intellectual truth is one who is open to recognize and welcome it in its moral aspect, one who is prepared to base his conduct on it even though it should prove unpalatable. He is one who does not shun intellectual inquiry the result of which is likely to be morally inconvenient. He is one who, besides being at pains to make himself acquainted with certain phases of the real intellectual order of the world, in no wise shrinks from receiving any intellectual truth whatever into that inner circle of beliefs in accordance with which conduct has to be determined. In other words, he is a person who has a will ready to submit itself to the Source and Author of all intellectual and moral truth. And if it be the case that a will submissive to the Will of God is

<sup>1</sup> Science and Christian Tradition, ed. 1894, p. 142.

the condition of belief in revelation, it seems to follow that a believer in revelation has, whatever may be his intellectual shortcomings, the highest characteristic of a seeker after truth.

This is one answer to Huxley. Another is suggested by a remark of his made in another place. In the preface to his essay on Hume he writes thus: "The development of exact natural knowledge in all its vast range, from physics to history and criticism, is the consequence of the working out, in this province, of the resolution to 'take nothing for truth without clear knowledge that it is such'; to consider all beliefs open to criticism; to regard the value of authority as neither greater nor less, than as much as it can prove itself to be worth. The modern spirit is not the spirit 'which always denies,' 'delighting only in destruction'; still less is it that which builds castles in the air rather than not construct; it is that spirit which works and will work 'without haste and without rest,' gathering harvest after harvest of truth into its barns and devouring error with unquenchable fire."

In this passage there seems to be some confusion between the true method of scientific investigation in the field of natural law and the true method of scientific investigation in the field of history. To contend—if Huxley does contend—that we can have no 'clear knowledge' of the truth of an alleged fact of history, unless the evidence of it satisfies the same tests as that of a received law of physics, is to deny the possibility of knowing history at all. And to disallow—if he does disallow—all authority which cannot 'prove its own worth' is, if not to wipe out historical knowledge altogether, at all events to reduce it within very narrow compass. It must be maintained that, in the field of history, the intelligent seeker after truth is not he who attempts to work by the alien methods

of physical inquiry, but he who bases his conclusions upon concrete experience after the method of illation, attaching value to authority even when the credentials of individual witnesses are very far from being beyond dispute.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE RESURRECTION AS MIRACLE.

I. THE intellectual hostility displayed against the alleged fact of the Resurrection arises from the circumstance that it is, or appears to be, a miracle—a departure from, or interruption of, the settled course of nature. Objectors may be divided into two classes, those whose conception of nature's order is, as they suppose, based only on experience, and those whose conception of it is derived from *a priori* principles. All seem to agree in ignoring, or in some way repudiating, all evidence of the Resurrection other than that of testimony. The question which they consider to be at issue is the superiority of testimony to contrary expectation.

From one point of view an examination of this question is of no special importance to Christianity, since Christianity does not rest on testimony alone for its proof of the miracle of the Resurrection. From another point of view, however, considerable importance attaches to it. It is important that we should understand the real strength, if it be strength, of the position maintained by objectors to the Resurrection; and it is, perhaps, still more important for us to see that whatever real strength it has is, for the intelligent Christian, no menace at all to his own belief.

Of objectors of the first class let Matthew Arnold and Huxley be taken as the spokesmen. They both admit that miracles are not impossible.

Arnold writes as follows :—"It is what we call the *Time-Spirit* which is sapping the proof from miracles,—it is the 'Zeit-Geist' itself. The human mind, as its experience widens, is turning away from them. And for this reason: *it sees, as its experience widens, how they arise*. It sees, that, under certain circumstances, they always do arise; and that they have not more solidity in one case than another."<sup>1</sup> "It is in a much more simple and unpretending way than controversialists commonly follow that we satisfy ourselves that we cannot build upon miracles. For it is possible, again, to exaggerate untruly the demonstrative force of the case against miracles. The logical completeness of the case for miracles has been vaunted, and vaunted falsely; some people are now disposed to vaunt falsely the logical completeness of the case against miracles. . . . A complete induction against them there is not. Nor does the evidence of their reporters fail because the evidence of no man can make miracles credible. The case against the Christian miracles is that we have an induction, not complete, indeed, but enough more and more to satisfy the mind, and to satisfy it in an ever increasing number of men, that miracles are untrustworthy. The case against their reporters is, that more and more of us see, and see ever more clearly, that these reporters were not and could not be the sort of picked jury that Paley's argument requires, but that, with all the good faith in the world, they were men likely to fall into error about miracles, to make a miracle where there was none, and that they did fall into error and legend accordingly."<sup>2</sup>

To this argument a twofold reply may be made. First, the Resurrection—certainly as regards the fact alleged,

<sup>1</sup> Literature and Dogma, ed. 1889, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> God and the Bible, ed. 1887, p. 19.

and perhaps also as regards the testimony that exists in favour of it—is unique among all reported instances of miracle. It has, as an event, nowhere any parallel, unless we go back to the creation of man recorded in the Book of Genesis. Secondly, it is, if true, of such incomparable importance, that it deserves, at the hands of any objector professing to write seriously, better treatment than to be lightly and uncritically classed with the general body of alleged miraculous occurrences.

Huxley takes a sterner view of the physical order of the universe. Holding that belief in it is a product of experience, he affirms that this belief is “one of the strongest and most justifiable of human convictions.” “And it must be admitted,” he contends, “to be a reasonable request, if we ask those who would have us put faith in the actual occurrence of interruptions of that order, to produce evidence in favour of their view, not only equal, but superior, in weight to that which leads us to adopt ours.” “This,” he goes on to say, “is the essential argument of Hume’s famous disquisition upon miracles; and it may safely be declared to be irrefragable.”<sup>1</sup>

He will not allow a miracle to be called a violation of the laws of nature. “The definition of a miracle as a suspension or a contravention of the order of Nature is self-contradictory, because all we know of the order of nature is derived from our observation of the course of events of which the so-called miracle is a part.”<sup>2</sup> “No one who wishes to keep well within the limits of that which he has a right to assert will affirm that it is impossible that the sun and moon should ever have been made to appear to stand still in the valley of Ajalon; or that the walls of a city should have fallen down at a trumpet blast; or that water was turned into wine;

<sup>1</sup> Essay on Hume, ed. 1894, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> p. 157.

because such events are contrary to uniform experience and violate laws of nature. For aught he can prove to the contrary, such events may appear in the order of nature to-morrow. But common sense and common honesty alike oblige him to demand from those who would have him believe in the actual occurrence of such events, evidence of a cogency proportionate to their departure from probability.”<sup>1</sup>

Speaking with reference to the force of testimony which it is reasonable to demand, he quotes with approval the following passage from Hume. “There is not to be found in all history, any miracle attested by a sufficient number of men, of such unquestioned goodness, education, and learning, as to secure us against all delusion in themselves; of such undoubted integrity, as to place them beyond all suspicion of any design to deceive others; of such credit and reputation in the eyes of mankind, as to have a great deal to lose in case of their being detected in any falsehood; and at the same time attesting facts, performed in such a public manner, and in so celebrated a part of the world, as to render the detection unavoidable: All which circumstances are requisite to give us a full assurance of the testimony of men.”<sup>2</sup>

The practical meaning of this appears to be, that we must have a large body of testimony open to scrutiny in every detail, and containing no discoverable flaw. In other words, the testimony must be preternatural. Thus Huxley, though declining to affirm that a miracle is impossible, practically affirms the impossibility of a miracle ever becoming an established fact.

But let us go on to examine his position more closely, probing the evidence or presumption against miracle which is represented as being of so great a strength.

<sup>1</sup> p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> p 162.

And let it be very carefully noted, that the point in question is the occurrence of a long-past, not of a present or future miracle. It is the occurrence of an event entering into experience, not of an event to be judged of by experience. Now, just as a miracle cannot, according to his own showing, be a violation of that order of nature of which, if it has happened, it forms a part, so neither can it be excluded from that body of experience of which, if it is cotemporaneously reported to have happened, it forms a part. On the hypothesis that our conception of the order of nature is a mere product of experience, any long-past event, however unique, must, in reason, be accepted as a natural occurrence, if only it receives the small amount of testimony needed to convince us of the truth of other incidents cotemporaneous with it. There is no more ground for discrediting the story of the Resurrection, than for refusing to believe the horrors said to have been perpetrated when Jerusalem was undergoing siege by Titus. The Resurrection takes its place among the incidents of nature's apparent order in the past, even if the period to which it belongs should seem to be so little known, that it cannot be established as a fact of history. Against it there seems to be no evidence of any kind.

II. But in truth our conviction of settled order in nature, in the past and in the present, is other than it could be if it were based only on the experience of an open mind. And objectors who on *a priori* grounds deny the possibility or the credibility of miracles have a much better case than those who offer experiential argument. Of this alternative view the late Professor Baden Powell and the late Professor Green may be taken as exponents. The former affirms that testimony is completely powerless, the latter that it is absolutely unmeaning, when it has for its subject an interruption of nature's order.

Writing in *Essays and Reviews* Baden Powell expresses himself as follows :—"The question agitated is not that of mere testimony, of its value, or of its failures. It refers to those *antecedent* considerations which must govern our entire view of the subject, and which being dependent on higher laws of belief, must be paramount to all *attestation*, or rather belong to a province distinct from it. What is alleged is a case of the supernatural; but no testimony can reach to the supernatural; testimony can apply only to apparent sensible facts; testimony can only prove an extraordinary and perhaps inexplicable occurrence or phenomenon: that it is due to supernatural causes is entirely dependent on the previous belief and assumptions of the parties." "The essential question of miracles stands quite apart from any question of *testimony*; the question would remain the same, if we had the evidence of our own senses to an alleged miracle, that is, to an extraordinary or inexplicable fact. It is not the *mere fact*, but the *cause* or *explanation* of it, which is the point at issue."

To this it may be answered, that, in the case of the Resurrection, the event which is testified to by the apostles and the early Church is most certainly a departure from the order of nature as it was then established. That is to say, of the alleged event, whether it be true or false, miracle is an inseparable part. We know too much about the normal conditions of the human constitution, even in that distant day, for it to be conceivable that our Lord's Resurrection and the manner of His appearances should have been a part of nature's order. So strange, so striking, so abrupt is the transition from the conclusion of the earthly life of men in general to the conclusion of the earthly life of Jesus Christ, that it is quite impossible to regard the latter as the outcome of causes purely natural. Baden Powell's distinction, then, between the mere fact of

the Resurrection, and its cause or explanation, is apparently quite futile.

It may here be remarked that, if it is at all consolatory to look upon the Resurrection as an incident in the settled order of a larger world, a world of which the intelligible universe is but a part, there seems to be, from a merely philosophical point of view, no reason why it may not be thus hypothetically classed. But to look upon it in this way and in no other is not, as has been contended in a former chapter, sound theology. And though, philosophically, it has the convenience of leaving unchallenged the fact of the Resurrection as it is alleged to have occurred, it evades rather than fairly meets the difficulty of well-attested miracle. Relatively to the world with which natural knowledge is concerned, we have strong testimony, which cannot be reasonably set aside, to the interruption of an order, which we seem to know intuitively cannot be interrupted. We want a knowable conciliation of this antinomy.

Green, in an essay on faith published in the third volume of his Works, makes the following pronouncement :—"In conceiving of a nature, or 'objective world' at all, we necessarily conceive it as uniform. If we assert a suspension of its laws, a break in its continuity, to have taken place even in a single case; if we maintain so much as the possibility of an intrusion or 'projection' of extra-natural agency within the natural; though we may be willing to stake our life upon the proposition, or more truly upon some moral or spiritual interest which we wrongly suppose it to involve, we are none the less saying what is intrinsically unmeaning; for we are affirming the existence of knowledge and nature, and at the same time denying the principle in virtue of which alone knowledge is possible and there is for our consciousness such a thing as nature."

This, it may be admitted, is to a certain extent a sound philosophical position, though there is considerable overstatement of the truth. Undoubtedly the unbroken uniformity of nature cannot reasonably be denied. Undoubtedly, too, the credence which we give to testimony is given in consequence of our apprehension of continuity in nature. And to believe, on the evidence of testimony, that the operation of nature is not always continuous may seem at first sight to involve mental contradiction. An endeavour will be made in the following section to show how this difficulty may be surmounted.

III. The order of nature appears to consist chiefly of three principal conceptions. They are, uniformity, or invariableness of relation between cause and effect; continuity, or invariableness of range, as to time or place or grouping or development, in the operation of given causes; and purpose, or invariableness of goal to which the operation of all causes tends. Uniformity appears to be the basis of all our knowledge of laws of nature; continuity, of all our power to become acquainted with historical events; purpose, of our fundamental principles of moral action. We thus owe to these conceptions the greater part of our rational life, so far as that life is dependent upon natural conditions. The scope of them is coterminous with that world which we seek to know, and in which we have to act, as reasonable beings. In that world we cannot conceive that a cause should be at any time followed by other than its own proper effect; or that the constancy of causes with which we are thoroughly familiar should inexplicably cease to be reliable; or that the natural ends of action should be suddenly transformed.

But that world is not necessarily everything that is. Nature, or the world with which knowledge is concerned, is not a conception which is co-extensive with either



space, or time, or active energy. And outside the natural universe, whether in space or time or exhibition of activity, not only may there be, or may have been, forces other than those with which we are acquainted ; but the forces with which we are acquainted may, as causes, produce or have produced effects according to some quite different laws, they may act or may have acted in some quite different arrangements, their purpose may be some quite different kind of goal. It is only as we conceive of nature as the object of reasoned or inferential knowledge, as essentially related to the mind which studies it, as designedly laying itself open to the search of an intelligence similar to its own, that we are in any way entitled to demand of it that it shall observe an invariable order. Reason has no interest in affirming, no ground for affirming, that beyond the boundaries of inferential knowledge the order is the same as it is within them. The Power, if any such there be, that fashions things outside the range of possible human knowledge may proceed on quite different methods from those of the Power that manifests itself in nature. And this is true even though the Powers should be one and the same Being, provided only that the systems are not essentially discordant.

Leaving this general view of the order of nature, let us concentrate our attention upon the question of continuity. In making investigations in the field of history we necessarily assume that nature has been continuous in its operations throughout the period and throughout the region of our research. Continuity is an absolutely necessary condition of our being able to comply with what seems to be a clear demand made upon the mind by nature—viz., that it should make investigation of the events of history. Since the time, whenever it may have been, that man first became a moral being, having essen-

tially the same constitution as that with which he is now born into the world, the forces of his nature, though producing innumerable varieties of concrete action, have nevertheless—so we necessarily believe—observed a rigorous continuity, in that they have never ceased to act within the limits of a certain ordered range. Nature never allows, in point either of excess or of defect, an individual citizen, or any one race of men, to differ, beyond a certain computable or intelligible degree, from others living under the same material conditions. But while we necessarily assume this axiomatic basis of historical inquiry, no necessity is upon us to deny that man's predecessor, if he had one, or man's analogue, if such anywhere exists outside the intelligible universe, may have been, or may be, altogether without what we understand by moral principle. Nor is there any necessity of thought that we should deny the possibility of human forces being interfered with in their activity by a force introducing itself from outside the knowable universe which we call nature. From a strictly philosophical point of view, man's appearance upon the earth may reasonably be regarded as a possibly abrupt beginning of moral order ; and abrupt modifications of natural human action, through the interference of an outside Power, may be considered to be at any time possible.

Apparently, then, in two ways there may be within the realm of nature action that forms no part of the existing continuity. There may be, at the hands of nature itself, abrupt beginnings, whether in time or space, of this continuity ; and there may be, at the hands of a Power other than, or more than, the Power that manifests itself in nature, abrupt derangements of it. However far we may be disposed to extend the limits, in point of time or space or force, of that activity of nature which it seems

to be given us eventually to understand, yet the field of investigation, it must be contended, is by no means all-inclusive and all-exhaustive. We cannot properly conceive of our possible historical knowledge as covering either the whole of time, or the whole of space, or the whole of force.

The student of nature has, indeed, no ground for anticipating breaches of continuity. His only warrant for believing in them is that they are possible, and that he meets with testimony to the fact of their occurrence. And such testimony he rightly looks upon with much suspicion if he is a person of any wide knowledge of mankind. For he is well aware that human nature, supposed to be continuously the same throughout history, is prone to see miracle, or to testify to miracle, where no miracle exists. Nor is he able, in so far as he is a student of nature only, to appreciate at its real value the abnormal strength of the testimony to the Resurrection. At best, perhaps, he can but allow that it is extremely great ; it may be, in his eyes, necessarily much less than perfect. He cannot, if he examines the testimony with intelligence and thoroughness, summarily reject it ; but he may be justified in holding his judgment in suspense.

Suspense of judgment would not be due, in the mind of a student of nature who should realize the possible existence of a Power beyond the Power that manifests itself in nature, to any reasonable presumption or probability against the occurrence of the miracle of the Resurrection. The antecedent probability against it, of which men are actually conscious, and which leads to cavilling against the available testimony in its favour, appears to arise, or to arise chiefly, from these two causes ;—first, a confusion between the uniformity and the continuity of nature, whereby men imbibe a mistaken notion that a miracle is

a fancied violation of a uniformity which they rightly hold to be inviolable; and secondly, an assumption—often, it may be, a tacit assumption due to inattention—that there is no extra-natural Power to be considered, whose action might interfere with nature's continuity.

An intelligent believer in revelation entertains a strong presumption against the occurrence of miracles of a certain class. He is disposed to discredit all alleged miracles which do not appear to subserve a moral end, knowing, as he does, that the only Power capable of interfering with nature's continuity is the Supreme God who is man's Moral Ruler and Ideal. The report, however, of interference having for its apparent object a revelation of moral truth is far from presenting necessary difficulty. If he sees in the interference, as in the Resurrection he is likely to see, an event of which there is some antecedent probability, an event the testimony to which is that of a body of men whom it is impossible to mistrust, and an event which he is able in some measure to verify for himself, he is in a position to accept it with the most unquestioning and assured conviction.

In three ways, in relation, that is, to each of the three kinds of evidence, the believer in God views the Resurrection from a standpoint other than that occupied by the mere student of nature. In the first place, a breach of continuity within the range of history, a breach introducing the visible beginning of a new moral life upon the earth, is an event for which there is some preparation in his mind. Not only to admit the existence of a creative epoch in the obscurity of the far-distant past, but to recognize antecedent probability of another such epoch arising at so recent a date as the Christian era, dividing history into two quite distinguishable parts, is a congenial activity of consciousness. In the second place, not only does he

attach, as any candid and intelligent student must, high value to apostolic and ecclesiastical testimony, as the united and persistent testimony of a large body of men not presumably less trustworthy than mankind in general, but he is in a position to discriminate between it and other similar testimony, if such there be, in respect of the credibility of individual witnesses. A preacher of the gospel is not, in his eyes, an ordinary citizen of the world, to be judged of by experience gained from general observation of human conduct. He is a firstfruit of the new moral order of which he testifies, an order of which a main characteristic is insistence upon a very high standard of truthfulness of speech. And in the third place, entertaining seriously the idea of the introduction into the world of a new moral force, his mind is open to perceive, and attribute to it as their source, results that may reasonably be expected to follow from it. Experimentally, that is, he makes himself acquainted with the power of the Resurrection to regenerate mankind.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE HUMAN WILL.

I. A REAL freedom of the human will is a fundamental implication of Scriptural theology. The action of a will freely choosing, having some power to enforce its choice, and being responsible for what it does or fails to do, is a manifest part of each of the three modes of faith. The hypothesis of freedom is necessary, too, in order to understand the record of supernatural revelation. God's redemptive discipline of mankind is only applicable to, and the response made to it by faith only proceeds from, a will in which resides some free power of determining between good and evil.

Freedom of will, however, is far from being a recognized axiom of ethical philosophy ; and even among thinkers by whom it is nominally accepted it meets with variety of interpretation. It is therefore incumbent upon an author who aims at exhibiting Scriptural doctrine as a true system of philosophy to endeavour to make good the position, that the will is really free in some such sense as that in which the writers of the New Testament must have understood it to be free.

The question is a question of ethical philosophy, of secular as well as of religious ethics. And yet it is one with which religious philosophy is far the more intimately concerned. It is in relation to God, far more than in relation

to nature, that the question has either speculative or practical importance. And it is by regarding man as subject to commands of God, far more than by regarding him as subject to laws of nature, that a satisfactory solution of it is to be obtained. In fact, without the aid of theology, a satisfactory solution of the problem would seem to be impossible. Aristotle leaves it unsolved; and among modern moralists we find Professor Sidgwick and Dr. Fowler writing respectively as follows :—

“We may say that, in so far as we reason to any definite conclusions concerning the future of ourselves or others, we must consider them as determined by unvarying laws; if they are not completely so determined our reasoning is *pro tanto* liable to error: but no other is open to us. While on the other hand, when we are ascertaining (on any principles) what choice it is reasonable to make between two alternatives of present conduct, it is just as impossible to apply determinist assumptions as it was in the former case inevitable. And from neither point of view is it practically important, for the general regulation of conduct, to decide the metaphysical question at issue in the Free-will Controversy.”<sup>1</sup> “We seem to be on the confines of human knowledge, and to be compelled to recognize that, in the sphere of human action, as well as in that of metaphysical speculation, there are apparent contradictions which we cannot reconcile. . . . The well-worn controversy, with which we have been mainly occupied in this chapter, appears to be one of those questions whose speculative interest is out of all proportion to their practical importance.”<sup>2</sup>

The importance of the question in its bearing upon conduct will receive notice later on. Its solubility first

<sup>1</sup> The Methods of Ethics, 3rd ed., p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Principles of Morals, Part II., pp. 337, 339.

claims attention. The writers just quoted are doubtless correct in pronouncing it insoluble, if they may be supposed to regard it only from the standpoint of pagan or secular philosophy. For, apart from his consciousness of God, man's reason appears to have no power of definitely embracing the conception of any will that is in a real sense free. God's revelation, however, of Himself to man is also a revelation to man of attributes of humanity but dimly conceived or vaguely guessed at; and among such attributes freedom of will occupies perhaps a foremost place. Although in every man born into the world there is a freedom of will, and although philosophy may take note of phenomena suggesting its existence, yet it is not until the fact is discovered to the consciousness by means of Divine revelation, that the phenomena can receive their true and definite interpretation. Making use, then, of the light afforded by theology, let us endeavour to obtain a clear philosophical view of the meaning of free-will as a fact of human nature.

The question to be solved is a twofold one. First, Is there any real sense in which the will, regarded as the part or phase of consciousness which resolves upon a course of action, is uncontrolled by the motives which incite to action? And secondly—for the former question will be answered in the affirmative—Is there any real sense in which its uncontrolled decisions are other than the necessary consequence of its own established character? The two questions may be otherwise written—Can the will modify the action to which the body of operating motives together urges? And can the will modify the action in more than one direction, according to its own present initial choice?

II. Let us try to form some clear conception of the constituents of man's nature with which our inquiry has



to do. Motives urge, we say, and the will resolves. What do we understand by motives, and what by will?

In the human organism, as in other organisms, there are manifestly a number of operative forces, component elements of the life-force, by the instrumentality of which the processes of life are carried on. Not only the life which man has in common with the brutes, but in a considerable measure his moral and intellectual and æsthetic life, appears to be thus the subject of organic action. Appetite, ambition, love of beauty, love of justice, self-denial, reverence for sacred things, are instances of such operative forces. So far as they are at any time recognized by the consciousness as aiming at some end, they are moving the agent to take action for the attainment of that end. They are what we commonly understand by motives.

Motives may be divided, from a moral point of view, into two main classes; the distinction between the two classes being one of supreme importance. It is based upon the distinction between pleasantness and naturalness as ends of action. Many things we do, or are moved to do, on account of the pleasure that attends the doing; many things we do, or are moved to do, because it somehow seems to be natural or proper that we should do them. In the one case we look to the satisfaction of our wants, in the other to the fulfilment of our duties. Of course the two kinds of motive may often concur in seeking the same end. A given line of conduct may be apprehended as at once the enjoyment of a pleasure and the performance of a duty; as when we take our daily exercise, or when we engage in an act of friendliness. Further, to allow ourselves some moderate amount of pleasure may reasonably be said to be a duty. But on the whole there may be said to be a standing opposition between the two classes

of motives, an opposition which is a condition of man's development. That which is natural or proper to be done seldom coincides entirely with that which is pleasant to be done; it commonly carries with it some perceptible element of pain.

In order to a comprehension of the rationale of moral action, this distinction or opposition between the two classes of motives requires to be clearly recognized, and to be marked by the application to them of different names. It will be in accordance with common usage if to the former we give the name 'desires.' The latter may suitably be spoken of as 'constraints,' or 'currents of constraint'; for they seem to be apprehended by the consciousness as putting constraint upon the agent to do what is natural and fitting to be done. Aristotle's distinction, it may be pointed out, between the pleasant and the noble as ends of conduct is, in effect, a distinction between desires and one or more currents of constraint.

The will, concerning which something must now be said, appears to be a part of consciousness quite distinguishable from the organic forces that have been spoken of. A resolution of the will is quite other than an operating motive, and quite other, again, than a conscious recognition of the operation of the motive. Neither the desire to be rich, nor the consciousness of being desirous of riches, is at all the same thing—even in the absence of all other motives—as the resolve to take steps for obtaining wealth. Neither the constraint to act justly, nor the consciousness of being under obligation to act justly, is at all the equivalent of the determination to be just. Those organic forces which we call motives are, in impelling the organism to develop its own particular life in adaptation to the conditions by which it is surrounded, analogous to the forces of the vegetable creation. But in or connected

with the human organism there is a part or phase of consciousness, which we designate the will, without whose intervention motives do not result in conscious action. The will is the medium of communication between motives and the corresponding faculties.

It is with the action of the will when alternative courses are urged upon it, that our discussion is concerned. And these alternative courses may be regarded as invariably represented by desire upon the one side and constraint upon the other. The choice to be determined by the will may be regarded as being invariably a choice between pleasure and duty. For though often there may be a simple conflict between desire and desire, or between constraint and constraint, yet the issue is in such cases almost always decided by a consciousness other than the will. Reason and perception give the preference to one desire rather than to another, or to one current of constraint rather than to another, and the will executes the decision without further consideration of its own—excepting only when reason and perception offer two or more alternative courses as of equal worth. If, for example, we are at liberty to choose between two enjoyable modes of spending a holiday, the difficulty is to ascertain which will be the more agreeable ; there is no further difficulty of choice between the greater pleasure and the less. Or if we are called upon to make choice between the public duty of prosecuting an offender and the private duty of dealing gently with him, the question is not at all one of willing to do our duty, but it is one of knowing what on the whole our duty is.

And no less, when both desires and constraints are operating together on either side of a given issue, do reason and perception prepare the way for the exercise of the will. The desires are practically reduced to one

resultant desire, and the constraints are practically reduced to one resultant constraint. We may be incited, for instance, both by desire and by constraint to an act of liberality and to an act of thrift. It may be felt, on the one hand, not only to be agreeable but also to be our duty to deal liberally with persons whom we employ ; and it may be felt, on the other hand, not only to be advantageous to ourselves but also to be incumbent on us to make provision for future wants. In such a case reason and perception appear to decide, before the motives are taken much cognizance of by the will, on which side lies the balance of desire, and on which side lies the balance of constraint. It is when they lie on different sides, that the will is ultimately called upon to make choice between alternatives ; and it is practically between simple pleasure and simple duty that it has to choose.

Here, before we pass on to another section, it is desirable that we should notice the late Professor Green's thoughtful but misleading treatment of will and motives. He recognizes no such distinction, as that which has just been pointed out, between two classes of organic motives, desires and constraints ; but he considers that, when there is competition among members of the one only class—that is, desires—one of them is singled out by consciousness, as that to which indulgence should properly be allowed. The selected desire becomes, through the mere fact of its being adopted by the consciousness, exalted above its rivals, and different in kind from them. It is *the* motive of moral action. And this Motive, this transformed desire, is at the same time that phase of consciousness which we denominate the will. The will is the action of consciousness adopting as its own the end sought by some operating desire. Two passages may be quoted in which this theory is set forth.

"We may say that there are various 'motives,' i.e. desires and aversions, which tend to make *A. B.* pay a debt, others which tend to prevent him from paying it. . . . Let us suppose that finally the debt is paid. The act of payment represents, expresses, is made what it is by a motive; by the consciousness of an object which the man seeks in doing the act. This object, however, as an object of *will*, is not merely one of the objects of desire or aversion, of which the man was conscious before he willed. It is a particular self-satisfaction to be gained in attaining one of these objects or a combination of them. The 'motive' which the act of will expresses is the desire for this self-satisfaction. It is not one of the 'motives,' the desires or aversions, of which the man was conscious previously to the act, as disposing him to it; at any rate, not one of these or a combination of them, as they were before the determination of the will, before the man 'made up his mind.' It is only as they become through the reaction of the self-seeking self upon them, and through its formation to itself of an object out of them—only as they emerge in an effort after a self-satisfaction to be found in this object—that they yield the motive of the act of will, properly so-called.

"This motive does indeed necessarily determine the act; it *is* the act on its inner side. But it is misleading to call it the *strongest* motive; for this implies a certain parity between it and the impulses which have been previously soliciting the will. The distinction of greater or less strength properly applies only to 'motives' in that sense in which they do *not* determine the will—to desires and aversions, as they are without that reaction of the self upon them which yields the final motive expressed by the action."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prolegomena to Ethics, p. 108.

"A man, we will suppose, is acted on at once by an impulse to avenge an affront, by a bodily want, by a call of duty, and by fear of certain results incidental to his avenging the affront or obeying the call of duty. We will suppose further that each passion (to use the most general term) suggests a different line of action. So long as he is undecided how to act, all are, in a way, external to him. He presents them to himself as influences by which he is consciously affected but which are not he, and with none of which he yet identifies himself; or, to vary the expression, as tendencies to different objects, none of which is yet *his* object. So long as this state of things continues, no moral effect ensues. It ensues when the man's relation to these influences is altered by his identifying himself with one of them, by his taking the object of one of the tendencies as for the time his good. This is to *will*, and is in itself moral action, though circumstances may prevent its issuing in that sensible effect which we call an overt act. But in the act of will the man does not cease to desire. Rather he, the man, for the first time desires, having not done so while divided between the conflicting influences. His willing is not a continuation of any of those desires, if they are to be so called, that were previously acting upon him. It is that which none of these had yet become; a desire in which the man enacts himself, as distinct from one which acts upon him. Whether its object—the object to which the moral action is directed—be the attainment of revenge, or the satisfaction of a bodily want, or the fulfilment of a call of duty, it has equally this characteristic. The object is one which for the time the man identifies with himself, so that in being determined by it he is consciously determined by himself."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 151.

Three apparently untenable positions, laid down in the foregoing extracts, may at once be commented on; two other positions, seemingly no less untenable, being reserved for consideration in the section following.

First, the moral quality, which characterizes the motive selected by the consciousness as aiming at the agent's own greatest good, is represented as being imparted by consciousness in adopting the given end or motive. But the truth appears to be, that this moral quality is inherent in the organic motive. Consciousness recognizes as the agent's greatest good the end which on the whole is pointed out by currents of constraint. And the moral motive is the resultant of the various operating currents. It is an organic motive, or combination of motives, aiming at the end pronounced by reason and perception to be the one which at the time best suits the needs of the organism as a living whole.

Secondly, the selection by consciousness of a given end is said to be equivalent to a resolution to secure this end. But the truth appears to be, that the two processes are quite distinct. An act of reason and perception is one thing, an act of will is quite another. That this is so would seem to be completely evident, when we consider that the will does not by any means invariably adopt that course which it knows, through the instrumentality of reason and perception, to be at the time the best among those to which motives point.

Thirdly, it is implied that without the operation of organic motives, with some one or more of which it can identify itself, the will does not exist. But the truth appears to be, that, apart from organic motives, the will has very real existence. And a sufficient proof of this would seem to be, that it constantly manifests itself in various acts of self-assertion having no relation to organic

motives. What, for example, is a sense of insult but the will's consciousness of injury inflicted upon itself by another will? And what is revenge but a disposition of the will to assert itself against another?

III. Green, besides knowing nothing of any inherent moral quality by which one of two classes of motives is, to the eye of consciousness, exalted above the other, apparently refuses to acknowledge any superiority which one motive may have over another by reason of its greater intensity. And, besides knowing nothing of any practical distinction between the recognition of an end as the greatest good and the resolve to compass that end, he apparently identifies the resolve to compass the end with the final determination which leads to action. A consideration of these two untenable positions will form the substance of the present section.

(1) Such a complete rejection of the extreme Determinist theory, as that implied in the refusal to attach any moral importance to the intensity of motives, appears to be quite unjustifiable. It is but little to admit, in regard to the influence of organic motives, that a moral action is conditioned by the presence of motives pointing to a limited number of ends, among which alone can the will's choice be made: what, beyond this, the extreme Determinist insists on is, that the decision of the will is governed entirely by the relative intensity of the competing motives. And rightly the Determinist holds that, not the mere presence of a motive, but its intensity when present, is an important factor in a determination of the will. The question is, what are the nature and degree of its importance? Let it be fully granted to Green, that the practical consciousness freely identifies itself with—that is, sides with or adopts—any one of the motives or ends according to its choice: we have still to ascertain how far the chosen



end is the end that is enacted. The extreme Determinist, knowing nothing of any such free choice by a practical consciousness, will say, on the one hand, that the strongest motive or set of motives wins the day, and is, or is practically equivalent to, the will. Green, attaching no value to the relative intensity of motives, considers, on the other hand, that the selecting consciousness crowns some motive, and enacts the end that it desires. But neither of these positions can be accepted.

The organic motives are veritable forces ; and they appear to be, in their operation, closely analogous to the forces of mechanics. In any case of moral action, in which the will is called upon to exercise choice, the motives are apparently—as has already been explained—reducible to two, one a resultant desire, the other a resultant current of constraint. This reduction is accomplished by reason and perception before the will seriously ponders its decision. Each of the resultant motives is a force acting with an intensity dependent upon the intensity and direction of the motives of which it is compounded. And, as a force acting on the will and urging it to the adoption of a certain course, it produces, or tends to produce, an effect which it is most unreasonable to ignore.

(2) The way is now clear before us to distinguish between the will's resolve to compass one of the two alternative ends presented to its choice and the final determination which leads to action. The will, which identifies or allies itself with either of the two competing motives, must be held to be, like them, itself a force. Not only has it, or is it, a faculty of choice, it also has, or is, a faculty of doing something to enforce its choice. Desire, constraint, and will—these appear to be, in their aspect of forces, co-ordinate activities, so that will may lend its aid to desire in resisting constraint, or may co-operate

with constraint in battling with desire. And the issue of the conflict depends, apparently, solely upon the relative energy of the three activities.

The issue of the conflict constitutes that which is, relatively to conduct as distinct from character, the determination of the will. But the will by which conduct or action is thus determined is something more than the practical selecting consciousness which allies itself with a motive. It is, apparently, this practical consciousness together with a practical consciousness expressing the superiority, in point of strength, of desire over constraint or of constraint over desire.

Let us now give attention to the conflict and its issue. Four different cases require notice.

(a) Should the selecting consciousness lend its aid to the stronger of the two resultant motives, the allied forces will of course prevail; and the action or conduct willed will proceed from the joint decision of the stronger motive and the aforesaid consciousness.

(b) If the difference in intensity between desire and constraint is less than the power which the selecting consciousness is able and willing to exert, then whichever of them has the aid of this consciousness will gain the victory. In other words, conduct will be, in kind, the free expression, in particular circumstances, of that practical self which is other than a system of organic motives. In regard to this case, which is no doubt one that very commonly occurs, we are thus to a great extent in accord with Green.

(c) Constraint may overpower the combination of desire and selecting consciousness. In other words, the incentives to duty may be so strong that the agent, however disobediently disposed, is quite unable to resist them. He necessarily determines upon the course of action which

reason and perception point out as fitting. This, again, would seem to be not uncommon; and in regard to it the extreme Determinist position is in great measure sound. A sane man cannot all at once, even though he be so inclined, behave in a manner strongly opposed to the moral habits and conventions to which he is accustomed. The history of Balaam seems to illustrate this case.

(*d*) It sometimes happens that the allied forces of constraint and selecting consciousness are overborne by the violence of desire. Here, again, conduct is, in kind, as it would be if the extreme Determinist hypothesis were true. An agent placed in circumstances of very strong temptation sometimes cannot, in spite of his resistance, avoid committing what he knows to be a sin or crime. The apostle Peter's denial of his Lord appears to be an instance of voluntary conduct thus unavoidably debased by the influence of the lower class of motives. "Not what he would, that did he practise; but what he hated, that he did."

To the two phases of will which we have been considering it is desirable to affix distinctive names. It will be sufficiently in accordance with common usage, if we call the practical selecting consciousness, which is quite distinct from, and makes free choice between, the competing motives, the relatively free will, or the free will. And the consciousness which, after selection, determines upon conduct may perhaps be fitly spoken of as the sometimes necessary will, or the necessary will. It is a consciousness which represents the superiority, in point of mere strength, of two forces over one, or of one force over two. It may be otherwise spoken of as a consciousness compounded of free will and operating organic motives.

IV. We have had before us the extreme Determinist position, and have found an answer to the first of the two

questions propounded at the beginning of this chapter. We have seen that, while the extreme Determinist position is not to be accounted true, it nevertheless contains a substantial element of truth. Free-will it is that alone determines conduct—in respect, that is, of the kind of conduct chosen, though not of the energy with which it is embraced—when resultant motives are nearly balanced ; but by motives conduct is, in kind, determined, when the resultant on either side is much more powerful than the other. We have now to deal with a qualified Determinism such as that of Green ; the second of the two questions being brought under consideration. Is there, we have to ascertain, any real sense in which the decisions of the free will, or practical selecting consciousness, are other than the results of its own established character ? Has the free will any present power of initial choice ?

Green, altogether rejecting the doctrine of the extremists, and maintaining that decisions of the will are in all cases the free act of consciousness, nevertheless considers that there are antecedent conditions necessarily making them what they are. The consciousness has a character of its own, and of that character its choice of motive is the necessary outcome ; being at the same time the act of a man's own character or self, and therefore free. He writes as follows : " A character is only formed through a man's conscious representation to himself of objects as his good, as that in which his self-satisfaction is to be found. Just so far as an action is determined by character, it is determined by an object which the agent has thus consciously made his own, and has come to make his own in consequence of actions similarly determined. He is thus conscious of being the author of the act ; he imputes it to himself." <sup>1</sup> " Rightly understood, the ascription of an action to

<sup>1</sup> Prolegomena to Ethics, p. 112.

character as, in respect to circumstances, its cause, is just that which effectually distinguishes it as free or moral from any compulsory or merely natural action.”<sup>1</sup>

He writes, further, in another place, disowning any more recondite kind of freedom—“To say that a man has power over determinations of his will is naturally taken to mean that he can change his will while he himself remains the same ; that given his character, motives, and circumstances as these at any time are, there is still something else required for the determination of his will ; that behind and beyond the will as determined by some motive there is a will, itself undetermined by any motive, that determines what the determining motive shall be—that ‘has power over’ his preference or choice, as this has over the motion of his bodily members. But an unmotivated will is a will without an object, which is nothing. The power or possibility, beyond any actual determination of the will, of determining what that determination shall be is a mere negation of the actual determination. It is that determination as it becomes after an abstraction of the motive or object willed, which in fact leaves nothing at all.”<sup>2</sup>

Let it now be fully admitted that the free will has dispositions or a character of its own, and that this character has very much to do with the decisions which it makes. Let it, too, be fully admitted that the character is the man himself, in so far that he consciously identifies himself with it, acknowledging as his own the resolves proceeding from it. It must still be contended, that this conception of freedom, and of the real practical self, does not satisfy the needs of religious consciousness. It must be maintained, in opposition to Green, that man has a more free and intimate self than this, a will which is capable of criticizing

<sup>1</sup> Prolegomena to Ethics, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Philosophical Works, vol. ii. p. 319.

and modifying its own character or dispositions. Doubtless it is a will, or self, which has a general purpose at which it aims ; though a protest may be entered against Green's dictum, that "an unmotived will is nothing."

Apparently, it is only when man is spoken to by God, and recognizes himself as the recipient of Divine commands, that he becomes conscious, or conscious in any full sense, of a certain degree of entire freedom from control. In pagan or natural philosophy there seems to be no place for a doctrine of freedom exceeding the freedom from the control of organic motives. But man, when he is brought under the direct discipline of the Will of God, awakes to the conception of a will in himself which has a certain degree of entire freedom to respond to this discipline as it chooses. His will becomes aware, moreover, of having—together with this degree of entire freedom—dispositions of its own impelling it in this or that direction. What has been spoken of as the free will is the higher or freer will together with the dispositions that are connected with it. The free will is a man's own moral self, mainly as he already has become ; the higher will is a man's own moral self, as he now purposes to become.

The dispositions, which operate on the occasion of the agent's receiving a command from God, may apparently be reduced to four. They are, a disposition to submit to God's Will, and a disposition to revolt, a disposition to conform to the course of conduct, as in itself fitting, which He points out, and a disposition to dissent from it in favour of one more pleasant. The dispositions to submit and to conform constitute together a force tending to obedience ; while the dispositions to revolt and to dissent co-operate in the direction of disobedience. The issue depends upon the intensity of these forces together with the action of the higher will—itself a force—siding with one or other of

them. Just as the free will is sometimes able, sometimes unable, to see its own resolves in the determinations of the necessary will, so, apparently, the higher will is sometimes able, sometimes unable, to find the free will giving effect to its own purpose. There is no need to repeat the exhibition, given in the former case, of the various issues.

This higher will, holding itself accountable for the action of its own dispositions, and able in some small measure freely to control that action, may be spoken of as the entirely free will, or, for reasons which will sufficiently appear, as the intelligent will. That it is no figment of the imagination let the two following considerations show.

(1) It is granted, let us say, that a resolve of the free will is independent of the influence of organic motives ; but it is contended that it is strictly dependent upon the character of the agent. It is further maintained that there is no getting behind this character ; that it has been gradually formed by a continuous succession of acts of will ; that it is the agent's very own self. Now plainly this is an untenable position, for the simple reason that it utterly fails to account for the will's first resolve. If the character of the will has been formed entirely by the man himself, then at the outset of his career as a human being he had no character. And without a character, according to the hypothesis we are considering, an act of will cannot possibly come into existence.

(2) The claim, which Green puts forward, that his doctrine fully suffices to explain the phenomena of remorse, cannot be allowed. "The view," he writes, "that action is the joint result of character and circumstances, if we know what we are about when we speak of character, does not render shame and remorse unaccountable and unjustifiable, any more than, in those by whom it is most thoroughly accepted, it actually gets rid of them. On the contrary,

rightly understood, it alone justifies them. If a man's action did not represent his character but an arbitrary freak of some unaccountable power of unmotivated willing, why should he be ashamed of it or reproach himself with it? . . . The dependence of a man's present and future on his past would indeed be fatal to the possibility of that self-reform which is conditional upon the wish for it, if his past had not been one in which his conduct was determined by a conception of personal good. But because his past has been of such a kind, there has been in it, and has been continued out of it into his present, a perpetual potentiality of self-reform, consisting in the perpetual discovery by the man that he is not satisfied; that he has not found the personal good which he sought; that, however many pleasures he has enjoyed, he is none the better off in himself, none the nearer to that which he would wish to be."<sup>1</sup>

Let us be careful not to confound four quite different states of consciousness. There is a dissatisfaction with the determinations of the necessary will, and there is a dissatisfaction with the decisions of the free will; and in either case there is a dissatisfaction that has its seat in reason and perception, and a dissatisfaction that has its seat somewhere in the will itself.

A person is dissatisfied, let us say, with the results of his past treatment of organic motives. The regulation of his conduct, in respect of the preferential indulgence accorded to some of them by the necessary will, manifestly, he considers, has proved a failure and requires to be altered. Now where is the seat of this critical disapproval? Certainly it is not in the system of organic motives, whose relative position in the matter of indulgence is about to undergo some modification. It is either in reason and

<sup>1</sup> Prolegomena to Ethics, p. 114.



perception, or somewhere in the free will. It is in reason and perception, if the feeling is a mental one; if, that is, it is only a feeling that, on the next occasion of similar motives being excited, some different indulgence of them will be more natural or will conduce more to happiness. It is in the free will, if the feeling is a moral one; if, that is, it is a feeling of regret for having aided in the perpetration of some foolish or improper deed. This moral feeling of dissatisfaction is what we understand by shame.

But shame is by no means the equivalent of remorse and sense of sin. In these it is the action, not of his necessary will, but of his free will, with which the agent is dissatisfied. It is his mistaken indulgence, not of organic motives, but of dispositions of the will, that he bitterly disapproves. In this case, as in the other, the seat of dissatisfaction certainly is not in the impulses whose relative indulgence requires to be modified; it is not in the dispositions of the will. Nor is it in reason and perception, which, being dissatisfied, only point out the rational desirability of some different treatment of the dispositions. Remorse and consciousness of sin must have their seat in some part of the will, other than organic motives, and other than the free will's dispositions. They must have their seat in the intelligent will, which learns that in sanctioning and supporting a free act of disobedience it lamentably fails to fulfil the purpose of its being.

V. Something must now be said concerning the general purpose which the intelligent will has before it. There is, apparently, a purpose of its own which, more or less consciously, it works out almost from the first. And there is, apparently, a purpose of God, of which it gradually becomes aware; a purpose which the working out of its own purpose is designed to accomplish, and the observation of which tends reciprocally to the fulfilment of its

own. The will's own end is the establishment, in the conditions by which it is surrounded, of its fullest freedom. God's purpose is the will's submission to, and entire reliance upon, Himself.

Although the intelligent will has all liberty of choice, yet the results of the exercise of its liberty depend upon the ordinances and the Will of God ; and they may or may not be agreeable to itself. And, although it has all liberty of choice, yet the power of giving practical effect to its choice is at first restricted within very narrow limits. By means of experience acquired by reason and perception and imparted to itself, and by means of varieties of discipline to which itself is subjected by God, it is taught that it can only be the free provider for itself of satisfying joys through fixing its choice upon such conduct as God requires, through further choosing this conduct because He requires it, and through looking to Him to support it in its choice. It learns that there is but one way to the realization of its own fullest freedom, namely, the free and glad surrender of itself to that accomplishment of the Divine purpose for which it was created. Four chief points in the education of the will may be briefly noticed.

(1) Although the intelligent will is quite distinct from organic motives, yet, apparently, it is keenly interested in their obtaining the greatest satisfaction that the agent's position in the world admits of. That is to say, the happiness of the agent arising from motives being gratified is, in being a state in which it cordially acquiesces, a genuine contribution to its own sense of freedom. And reason and perception gradually teach it that this greatest satisfaction depends upon a consistent determination of the necessary will in favour of the moral conduct which constraints point out. It thus learns, in dealing with its own dispositions, to influence the resolves of the free will in the

direction of taking part with constraint against desire. It acquires a spirit of conformity to the moral order of the world.

(2) Through God's visiting disobedience of the free will with consciousness of sin, the intelligent will—the seat of this consciousness being in itself—becomes aware of the horrible consequences of indulging the disposition to revolt. It thus learns to aid, with such power as it has, the disposition to submit unreservedly to the Will of God.

(3) God's revelation of Himself as the loving Father of mankind likewise moves, though in another manner, the intelligent will in the direction of free submission to His decrees. Responding to the Divine love, it learns to delight in seeking to render to God the service which is His due.

(4) The intelligent will urging with its whole might, the free will immediately, and the necessary will mediately, to obedience to God's commands, finds its efforts sometimes frustrated by the operation of forces other than itself. Contrary dispositions which form a constituent part of the free will, and contrary motives which find expression in the necessary will, sometimes prevent the realization of its choice. It cannot always will effectually and successfully the things which it knows to be calculated to afford it abiding satisfaction. Being unable to control the decisions of the free will and the necessary will, it is not wholly free, either in action or in acceptance of results. In these circumstances one only course is open to it, in order that it may enter into full possession of its freedom. It must pray to God for new supplies of strength. It must continually look to Him for the needful power to overcome its own unruly dispositions, and also the organic motives which interfere with the performance of moral actions.

VI. One question remains for consideration. Is a belief in free-will—understood to mean complete liberty of choice as to the indulgence of a higher or a lower impulse, together with some power of enforcing the decision made—of any practical importance in the regulation of conduct? Is the Determinist as likely as the Libertarian to choose and compass the higher end?

In dealing with this question we may confine our attention to the qualified Determinism which looks upon an act of will as independent of the power of organic motives, but as the necessary result of the will's own character. For any condemnation of this in relation to its effect on moral progress must be, at least equally, a condemnation of the extreme Determinist position.

We find Green maintaining that Determinism entirely consists with steady progress towards perfection. "There is nothing," he writes, "in the fact that what a man now is and does is the result (to speak pleonastically, the *necessary* result) of what he has been and has done, to prevent him from seeking to become, or from being able to become, in the future other and better than he now is, unless the capacity for conceiving a better state of himself has been lacking to him in the past or has become lost to him at present: and that this is not so is shown by the fact that he does ask the question whether and how he can become better, even though he answer the question in the negative. The dependence of a man's present and future on his past would indeed be fatal to the possibility of that self-reform which is conditional upon the wish for it, if his past had not been one in which his conduct was determined by a conception of personal good. But because his past has been of such a kind, there has been in it, and has been continued out of it into his present, a perpetual potentiality of self-reform, consisting in the perpetual

discovery by the man that he is not satisfied ; that he has not found the personal good which he sought ; that, however many pleasures he has enjoyed, he is none the better off in himself, none the nearer to that which he would wish to be. The capacity for the conception of being better, which such an experience at once evinces and maintains, forms in itself both the inchoate impulse to realize the conception, and the possibility of its realization.”<sup>1</sup>

A person conscious of steadfastly striving with the whole energy of his nature to become better will become better, however he may account for the consciousness that strives. Thus much may be readily conceded. Relatively to such persons, and from the point of view of pagan or natural morality, the question of free-will is of little or no practical importance ; Green’s doctrine of the process of self-reform, though philosophically unsound, not being morally dangerous. But in the case of the multitude who are not thus conscious it is a very different matter. Green allows that there are some for whom there may be danger in the doctrine, though he contends that this is really due, not to the doctrine, but to misapprehension of it. Let us, having before us his own words, notice the invalidity of this contention. Let us see how, in truth, Determinism, if consistently adopted as a principle of conduct, cannot but be a demoralizing doctrine. He writes as follows :—

“Though there is no valid reason why the acceptance of ‘determinism,’ in the sense explained, should debar us from looking for ‘change of heart and life’ in the individual, it may yet be that a misunderstanding of the doctrine does sometimes in some degree tend to paralyze the moral initiative and weaken the power of self-reform. It is probably never fair to lay the blame of a moral deterioration or enfeeblement primarily on intellectual

<sup>1</sup> p. 114.

misapprehension ; but in a speculative age even misapprehension may tend to promote vicious tendencies, by interfering with the conviction which would otherwise be the beginning of their cure. The form of misunderstanding on the subject now before us, most likely to be practically mischievous, will be the confusion, already noticed, between the true proposition that there is a necessary connection between character and motive, and between motive and act, and the false proposition that man is a necessary agent, in the sense of not being his own master but an instrument of natural forces. Men may be found to argue, more or less explicitly, that, if that which he is depends on what he has been and has done, and if, further, whatever he may become in the future will depend on what he now is—that if this is so, as it cannot be denied that it is, there is no good in his trying painfully to become better ; that he may as well live for the pleasure of the hour as it comes. How may such self-sophistication most compendiously be met ?

“ In the first place, it should be pointed out that such language implies in the highest degree, on the part of any one who uses it, a self-distinguishing and self-seeking consciousness. But for this he could not thus present to himself his own condition, as determined by what he has been in the past and determining what he will be in the future. Nor unless there were something which he sought to become, a good of himself *as himself* which he sought to attain—unless he were thus determined by himself as an object to himself—could the question, whether there was any use in trying to improve himself instead of letting things take their course, have any meaning for him.

“ It should be shown, secondly, that this self-distinguishing and self-seeking consciousness, with the yearning for a better state of himself, as yet unattained, which it carries

with it, in a special sense makes him what he is, and has made that past history of himself, on which his present state depends, what it has been ; that therefore, just so far as his future depends on his present and his past, it depends on this consciousness, depends on a direction of his inner life in which he is self-determined and his own master, because his own object.

“Further, it should be shown that, so far from the dependence of his future upon what he now is and does being a reason for passivity, for letting things take their course (which means, practically, for following the desire or aversion of which the indulgence gives him most present pleasure or saves him most present pain), it would only be the absence of this dependence that could afford a reason for such passivity.”<sup>1</sup>

Green, it will be observed, addresses himself to the case of a person who questions whether, having and being the character that he now has and is, he is capable, on the hypothesis of Determinism, of developing his character into something better. But this is not the real point, or at all events it is not the chief point, at issue. Rather it is, Does it at all rest with an inmost self, an intelligent and creative will, whether or not I shall become better? Green's argument may serve to stimulate constraints and good dispositions ; it provides no substitute, no compensation, for the stifled energy of the intelligent and creative will.

For Determinism accepted as a creed, and consistently employed as a principle of conduct, by one who is conscious of daily struggles with temptation cannot but have a stifling influence on energy of will. If to the question—Does it at all rest with an inmost creative self, of which I seem to be conscious as something other than

<sup>1</sup> p. 116.

character, and even than character coupled with aspiration, whether or not I shall become better, whether or not I shall surely pursue an upward course?—if to this question the agent makes answer to himself—You have learned from philosophy that you have no such inmost self, and that moral progress is dependent only upon your past resolves together with the wish for improvement now operating in you—some paralysis of effort must almost inevitably ensue. For the strife of the intelligent will against its own unruly dispositions is oftentimes a prolonged and painful process. And the agent, though he may find it difficult to disbelieve, at the bidding of philosophy, his consciousness of the existence of a free power within him, may nevertheless readily accept its teaching that moral progress is dependent upon no such power. And having done so, he will see no need for making distressful effort in the future. Let my character, he will argue, and my wish for improvement accomplish their own natural work in their own natural way : additional effort on my part—though indeed I am told that I have no faculty of making any—would only promote internal conflict, without being productive of any good result.

Determinism, then, we conclude, besides being philosophically untrue, is a doctrine which, if it were consistently adopted as a principle of conduct, would be in the case of very many persons largely subversive of moral progress.



## CHAPTER VI.

### FAITH IN GOD.

I. THE time has come for justifying the twofold assumption of which we have more or less been making use—the assumption, that there is in the consciousness of some men a true apprehension of a Personal God who is their Creator and Moral Ruler, and that this apprehension, in so far as it is a real apprehension of moral truth, is due to revelation made individually to them.

“By faith,” writes the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God.” “Without faith,” he writes, “it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.” And his words seem to imply that knowledge of God as Creator and Moral Ruler is not a part or a product of the natural endowment of man’s reason: God is known, not by every man, but only by such as have the distinction of religious faith. It is necessary to the soundness of the argument of the present treatise that this view should be sustained. A philosophical vindication of Scriptural Christianity would seem to be impossible, unless it is the case that apprehension of the God of Scripture—real apprehension of Him as Creator and Moral Ruler—comes primarily or essentially, to each individual who possesses it, by means of special revelation.

It has, indeed, been very commonly supposed that apprehension of God is a normal activity of human consciousness. Natural religion—understood to mean some practical recognition of God, not merely as the Power that manifests itself in nature, but as the Creator and Moral Ruler of mankind—has been regarded as a product of the mental and moral constitution with which all men coming into the world are alike endowed. But this position, when subjected to rigid scrutiny, seems incapable of being held. Doubtless there may truly be said to be, in the case of men in general, a certain natural seeking after God, and a certain natural degree of approach to apprehension of Him. But the Personal God, who is the Object of worship to Jew and Christian, though in various ways reason may independently confirm the knowledge of Him, is not known, and cannot become known, to reason except by revelation.

When St. Paul writes in his Epistle to the Romans—“That which may be known of God is manifest in them ; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity”—when he writes this, he may seem to be proclaiming a view to which that here adopted is opposed. It must be held, however, that he is not really doing so. The passage admits of being interpreted to mean, that nature is perpetual secondary evidence of a Godhead that has been specially revealed. And such an interpretation seems alone consistent with St. Paul's teaching at Lystra and at Athens. “We bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is : who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in

their own ways. And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts xiv. 15—17). "As I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you. The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent" (Acts xvii. 23—30).

The question implicitly raised by the foregoing passages—how far knowledge of God, revealed to one man, can be by him conveyed to another—will receive consideration later on. An endeavour must first be made to show that as an Object of knowledge He first enters the domain of human thought by means of supernatural revelation. Among a Christian people knowledge of Him begins according to His word, with earliest childhood; and this makes it somewhat difficult to realize that it is not a

natural endowment. But in many religions there seems to be nothing whatever to indicate that the worshippers have any real apprehension of the true God—of a God transcending nature, and exercising appreciable control over men's moral conduct. Nor does a consideration of the capacities of human reason afford any hope that developing thought can ever succeed in making discovery of Him.

For the establishment of the view that reason is unable to discover God, let use be made of unquestionable results obtained by Kant. It is scarcely necessary, and it would be difficult, to follow him in his examination and rejection of suggested reasonable proofs of God's existence. Let his authority be in this case a substitute for argument. Let it be taken for granted that he makes good the simple point, that *unaided* reason can never really know that there is a God transcending nature. A full statement of his conclusions on the subject will now be given; and, wherein they seem to be in error, they will be traversed.

There is, he says, no demonstrating, no real knowing, that God exists. For every proof of His existence that can be offered is either resolvable into, or dependent upon, this position—that the conception of anything can carry with it the objective existence of the thing conceived. And this position is plainly untenable.

But the existence of God, he contends, can be no more disproved than it can be proved. Further, speculative reason is under some natural obligation to assume that He exists. Reason seeks to become acquainted with the world, and the intelligent study of the world requires the working hypothesis of a complete unity of design of which the world is the expression. A Supreme Being having existence as its Author is thus a conception which the speculative reason may most legitimately entertain. It

may entertain it, not as a constitutive or certainly known principle, but as a principle regulative or usefully and justifiably assumed.

The following are some of the passages in which Kant sets forth his view :—

“It is the ontological proof which contains the *only possible argument* (supposing always that any speculative proof is possible), and human reason can never do without it.”<sup>1</sup>

“Time and labour are lost on the famous ontological (Cartesian) proof of the existence of a supreme Being from mere concepts ; and a man might as well imagine that he could become richer in knowledge by mere ideas, as a merchant in capital, if, in order to improve his position, he were to add a few noughts to his cash account.”<sup>2</sup>

“For the purely speculative use of reason the Supreme Being remains, no doubt, an ideal only, but an ideal *without a flaw*, a concept which finishes and crowns the whole of human knowledge, and the objective reality of which, though it cannot be proved, can neither be disproved in that way.”<sup>3</sup>

“To mistake the regulative principle of the systematical unity of nature for a constitutive principle, and to presuppose hypostatically as cause, what is only in the idea made the foundation for the consistent use of reason, is simply to confound reason. The investigation of nature pursues its own course, guided by the chain of natural causes only, according to general laws. It knows the idea of an author, but not in order to derive from it that system of purposes which it tries to discover everywhere, but in order to recognize his existence from those purposes,

<sup>1</sup> Critique of Pure Reason, translated by Professor Max Müller, p. 536.

<sup>2</sup> p. 518.

<sup>3</sup> p. 550.

which are sought in the essence of the things of nature, and, if possible, also in the essence of all things in general, and consequently as absolutely necessary. Whether this succeeds or not, the idea itself remains always true, as well as its use, if only it is restricted to the conditions of a merely regulative principle.”<sup>1</sup>

“We are justified not only in representing to ourselves the cause of the world in our idea according to a subtle kind of anthropomorphism (without which we can think nothing of it), as a Being endowed with understanding, the feelings of pleasure and displeasure, and accordingly with desire and will, but also in attributing to it infinite perfection, which therefore far transcends any perfection known to us from the empirical knowledge of the order of the world. For the regulative law of systematical unity requires that we should study nature as if there existed in it everywhere, with the greatest possible variety, an infinitely systematical and well-planned unity. And although we can discover but little of that perfection of the world, it is nevertheless a law of our reason, always to look for it and to expect it ; and it must be beneficial, and can never be hurtful, to carry on the investigation of nature according to this principle. But in admitting this fundamental idea of a supreme author, it is clear that I do not admit the existence and knowledge of such a Being, but its idea only, and that in reality I do not derive anything from that Being, but only from the idea of it, that is, from the nature of the things of the world, according to such an idea. It seems also, as if a certain, though undeveloped consciousness of the true use of this concept of reason had dictated the modest and reasonable language of philosophers of all times, when they use such expressions as the wisdom and providence of nature as synonymous

<sup>1</sup> p. 594.

with divine wisdom, nay, even prefer the former expression, when dealing with speculative reason only, as avoiding the pretension of a greater assertion than we are entitled to make, and at the same time restricting reason to its proper field, namely, nature."<sup>1</sup>

II. But man, Kant goes on to teach, can do more than legitimately assume with the speculative reason that God exists. With the practical reason he may believe it. To his reason when concerning itself with conduct the existence of God becomes sufficiently apparent. He is conscious of a moral law which he is under obligation to obey; and he is conscious of a happiness in store for him if he endeavours to be loyally obedient. The course of nature, however, manifestly fails to reward moral goodness as it deserves. Hence the existence of a God able and willing to confer in a future life the happiness here earned by merit is a postulate of the practical reason. Since the moral law exists and implicitly carries sanctions with it, God and a future life are necessary facts for the consciousness of the individual moral agent. The following are some of Kant's own words:—

"I assume that there really exist pure moral laws which entirely *a priori* (without regard to empirical motives, that is, happiness) determine the use of the freedom of any rational being, both with regard to what has to be done and what has not to be done, and that these laws are imperative *absolutely* (not hypothetically only on the supposition of other empirical ends), and therefore in every respect necessary. I feel justified in assuming this, by appealing, not only to the arguments of the most enlightened moralists, but also to the moral judgment of every man, if he only tries to conceive such a law clearly."<sup>2</sup>

"I say, that just as the moral principles are necessary

<sup>1</sup> p. 600.

<sup>2</sup> p. 692.

according to reason in its *practical* employment, it is equally necessary according to reason in its *theoretic* employment to assume that everybody has reason to hope to obtain happiness in the same measure in which he has rendered himself deserving of it in his conduct ; and that, therefore, the system of morality is inseparably, though only in the idea of pure reason, connected with that of happiness.”<sup>1</sup>

“As the moral law remains binding upon everyone in the use of his freedom, even if others do not conform to that law, it is impossible that either the nature of things in the world, or the causality of the actions themselves, or their relation to morality, should determine in what relation the consequences of such actions should stand to happiness. If, therefore, we take our stand on nature only, the necessary connection of a hope of happiness with the unceasing endeavour of rendering oneself deserving of happiness, cannot be known by reason, but can only be hoped for, if a *highest reason*, which rules according to moral laws, is accepted at the same time as the cause of nature. . . . God and a future life are two suppositions which, according to the principles of pure reason, cannot be separated from the obligation which that very reason imposes on us.”<sup>2</sup>

“After the failure of all the ambitious schemes of reason to pass beyond the limits of all experience, enough remains to make us satisfied for practical purposes. No one, no doubt, will be able to boast again that he *knows* that there is a God and a future life. For a man who knows that, is the very man whom I have been so long in search of. As all knowledge, if it refers to an object of pure reason, can be communicated, I might hope that, through his teaching, my own knowledge would be increased in the

<sup>1</sup> p. 694.

<sup>2</sup> p. 696.



most wonderful way. No, that conviction is not a *logical*, but a *moral* certainty; and, as it rests on subjective grounds (of the moral sentiment), I must not even say that *it is* morally certain that there is a God, &c., but that *I* am morally certain, &c. What I really mean is, that the belief in a God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral sentiment, that there is as little danger of my losing the latter, as there is any fear that I should ever be deprived of the former."<sup>1</sup>

III. Kant's position, then, appears to be this:—The existence of God can never be really known; for speculative purposes, however, it may properly and safely be assumed; while for practical purposes it may be confidently believed. To each of the three parts of this position some exception must be taken.

(1) Doubtless he is right in contending, as he does, that attempted proofs from the contingency of the world, and from evidences of architectural design in nature, can of themselves in no wise reach to the Supreme Being, but must ultimately rest upon the ontological thesis—that God cannot but exist, since we entertain the conception of Him. His handling, however, of this thesis must be held to be partially erroneous. He does not appear to be justified in treating it as entirely impossible. He does not appear to be justified in simply dealing with the existence of God as with the existence of things in general. Although assuredly, as he points out, there cannot be extracted from any concept the actual existence of the thing conceived, yet there seems to be a different and a true way in which our entertaining the very special conception of God is a proof that He actually exists. This proof, not depending upon the operation of unaided reason, but connected with God's revelation of Himself, will be presently considered.

<sup>1</sup> p. 711.

(2) In maintaining that, in order to the better investigation of nature, the speculative reason may and must assume the existence of God as a regulative principle, he seems to commit a twofold error. In the first place, it must be entirely denied that the unifying idea demanded by reason is at all equivalent to the religious conception of the Supreme God. The Being whose existence is contemplated by reason, in its systematic study of the world, is no more than what we understand by the Power that manifests itself in nature—a Power having mind and will, but a Power that may be not other than finite. In the second place, the conception of this Power as existing is much more than a working hypothesis; it is rather, an axiomatic truth. For, although the mind may be long before it consciously employs the notion, it necessarily entertains it in some measure from the very first. The principles of uniformity and continuity, alternative bases of speculative investigation of the world—what are they but forms of an initial and intuitive conception of nature as the systematic expression of a single mind and will?

(3) His moral argument for the existence of God is apparently based upon a misapprehension of man's moral nature. It cannot be at all admitted that there is in man's natural constitution any imperative moral law, imposing obedience to its commands irrespectively of their observance by other men, and interfering with the attainment of happiness in the present life. It must be maintained that, in so far as man naturally and reasonably associates happiness with virtue as its necessary or fitting consequence, it is to nature and his fellow men that he looks for happiness, and to nature and his fellow men that he looks for moral guidance. Conduct which seems to militate decidedly against earthly happiness is not for him moral conduct. The natural moral law accommo-

dates itself much to circumstances : the will of the natural moral agent, of the moral agent, that is, to whom God does not reveal Himself, knows no great conflict between duty and enjoyment. That which deserves happiness is that which is pointed out to him by decrees of nature and by human ordinances ; and it is that which does, in general, secure to him, at the hands of nature and of his fellow men, the greatest happiness which it is in his power to obtain. If, in the event, he occasionally seems to miss the happiness which is his due, he may console himself with the hope that it will be within the resources of the Power that manifests itself in nature to give him compensation in a future life. But there appears to be nothing whatever in the moral ordering of the world—let Aristotle be a witness—to raise his thought to the religious conception of a Supreme God altogether transcending nature.

That the God, of whose existence Kant considers the practical reason to become aware, is not the Supreme God whom Christians worship is, indeed, shown by himself in the following passage. “After practical reason has reached this high point, namely the concept of a sole Original Being as the supreme good, it must not imagine that it has raised itself above all empirical traditions of its application and soared up to an immediate knowledge of new objects, and thus venture to start from that concept and to deduce from it the moral laws themselves. For it was these very laws the internal practical necessity of which led us to the admission of an independent cause or of a wise ruler of the world that should give effect to them. We ought not, therefore, to consider them afterwards again as accidental and derived from the mere will of the ruler, particularly as we could have no concept of such a will, if we had not formed it in accordance with

those laws. So far as practical reason is entitled to lead us we shall not look upon actions as obligatory because they are the commands of God, but look upon them as divine commands because we feel an inner obligation to follow them. We shall study freedom according to the unity of design determined by the principles of reason, and we shall believe ourselves to be acting in accordance with the Divine will in so far only as we hold sacred the moral law which reason teaches us from the nature of actions themselves." <sup>1</sup>

IV. Reason then, it appears, natural and unaided, though it reaches the conception of a Power that manifests itself in nature, does not and never can, either in its speculative or in its practical activity, attain to a knowledge of the true God. The utmost that reason can do, even in the way of conjecture, falls far short of the Christian conception of the Supreme Being. It may assign to the Power that manifests itself in nature the attribute of personality, in so far as personality is implied by mind and will; but between the Power and mankind there exist no personal relations; man is no more, in the regard of this Power that sustains him, than any senseless tree or stone. It may assign to it some extension in time or space or force beyond the limits of the intelligible world; but it cannot, apparently, regard the Power as other than finite. It may assign to it the origination of phenomenal causation; but it cannot, apparently, regard the Power as being itself absolutely uncaused. It may assign to it a very high and marvellous degree of ingenuity and skill in fashioning the materials of the universe; but it cannot, apparently, regard the Power as the creator of these materials. In all these respects, and in any others in which reason may seek to portray the Power of which

<sup>1</sup> p. 703.

its study of nature makes it conscious, the range of conjecture is strictly limited by analogical necessity. For conjecture is, in its genesis, merely incomplete inference from experience. Even imagination, though it has the fullest scope to contradict experience, can never—so it would certainly seem—transcend it. Reason, even in its highest and wildest imaginative flights, always remains tied to the world it knows: never can it escape from the subtle bondage of analogical argumentation.

If this is so, if rational conjecture, though carried to the utmost limit of imagination, could never exalt the Power that manifests itself in nature into the likeness of the Supreme God, what is the origin of the idea of God? If unassisted reason can contemplate only a world which it can fill with objects bearing resemblance to things it naturally knows, whence comes to it the conception of a Being, to whose existence no limits can be assigned; of a Being, who is Self-existent, independent of all possible causation; of a Being, who out of nothing can create matter; of a Being, who has an entirely holy and loving will, and to whom, as to a Person, man owes the deepest reverence and submission?

Certainly there seems to be but one answer to this question. Certainly it must be held that knowledge of God is by revelation. God reveals Himself as Creator and Moral Ruler to minds already endowed by Him with power, not to make discovery of Him, but to recognize Him when revealed. The conception of God, as a Being altogether transcending the Power that manifests itself in nature, first enters the domain of human thought by means of the direct and immediate operation of God Himself.

Here we take up the question, referred to in the first section of this chapter, of the transmission of the revealed

idea of God from mind to mind. We take up also the reserved point of our first objection to Kant's threefold position—the possibility of a real ontological proof of God's existence. The conception of a Supreme Being who is Creator of all things, who is non-finite, and who is Self-existent, appears to be a conception which is transferable by one man to another. Once revealed it becomes, or may become, a common possession of human thought. And as a common possession it appears to furnish philosophy with an ontological and objective proof of the existence of a God transcending nature. The double circumstance, that men entertain the idea of a Supreme Creator, and that the idea is certainly no product of natural and unaided reason, seems to show conclusively that it is a revelation of Himself by an actually existing God. In this way the existence of a God transcending nature is philosophically deducible from the conception of Him. Kant's distinction between the idea of God as a regulative principle, and the idea of Him as a constitutive principle, falls to the ground no less when the God in question is the Supreme Creator, than when He is only the Power that manifests itself in nature. The idea of a Self-existent Being, non-finite and creating matter, properly belongs, when once it is entertained, to the region, not of conjecture and assumption, but of knowledge. He who is at all cognizant of this idea of God may, if he considers well and reasons truly, reach the sure conclusion that such a God exists.

But this conception of God and this proof of His existence are alike imperfect. That is to say, they fall short of what is vouchsafed to us. A more universal and more intimate idea, a more intimate and more operative proof, are the idea and the proof of Him as our direct and immediate Moral Ruler. The idea and the proof are in

the main subjective. While God's revelation of Himself as Creator, non-finite and Self-existent, scarcely seems to need to be repeated, passing on, by ordinary conditions of human intercourse, from mind to mind, it is otherwise with His revelation of Himself as Moral Ruler. His revelation of Himself as a Personal Will entitled to and inviting the voluntary submission of all human wills, appears to be made anew, and to need to be made anew, to every individual whom it is His purpose to enlighten. Such, apparently, is man's mental and moral constitution, that he can have no real apprehension of God as guiding and controlling Will, unless he has had personal experience of Divine communications addressed to his own individual will. The command said to have been given at the very commencement of the history of the human race—"Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"—this command appears to be most truly symbolic of the early discipline to which God subjects those who come, coming only by means of such commands, to know Him as Moral Ruler. He reveals Himself to men one by one as a Will demanding the unconditional obedience of human wills, to which He has nevertheless given some power to disobey. This is the explanation, the only satisfactory explanation, of the categorical imperative of moral science.

He whose will is spoken to by the Will of God learns thereby the fulness, and afterwards, through discipline, he learns the limitations, of his own personality. He learns its fulness, because he learns that he is free. He becomes aware of that which other men, apparently, are not in their own case similarly aware of, namely, that he has—in small degree, indeed, but not the less truly—a creative freedom of the will. He awakes to a conscious-

ness that he is to a certain extent independent of his motives and dispositions ; that in his inmost self he is other than they ; that he, apart from them, is free to choose, free to give some effect to choice, free even to oppose the Author of his freedom.

And one who thus becomes conscious of his own personality through contact with the Personality of God, and who by obedience lays himself open to continued communications of the Divine Will, cannot but know that God exists. To such a man, though indeed he may sometimes need reminding of it, there can scarcely be any fact more certain, than that there is a Supreme Being, who created and upholds the world, and who calls upon His people individually to live in righteous obedience to His Will.

V. We pass on to consider further points in connection with what we know of God.

And here let strong protest be made against Mansel's argument in his Lectures on *The Limits of Religious Thought*. It appears to consist of two main parts. In the first—the existence of God being presupposed—we are shown that in attempting to form a philosophical conception of His nature we become involved in hopeless difficulties and contradictions. In the second we are told that we are not justified in rejecting revelation because some of its contents do not sufficiently commend themselves to our mental and moral consciousness. The argument is, or appears to be, that, since knowledge of God's nature is impossible, particular doctrines and precepts belonging to Scriptural revelation are not to be criticized as if they were a presentation of truth ; but they are to be accepted as showing what, for the regulation of our conduct, God wills that we should think of Him.

All turns upon unwarrantable assumptions in con-



nection with the philosophical terms 'infinite' and 'absolute.' It is assumed by Mansel that reason is constrained to conceive of a Supreme Being who, besides being First Cause, is Infinite and Absolute. And his interpretation of Infinite is, that which positively has no limits; of Absolute, that which exists, or can exist, in perfect and unchanging self-completeness. Having made these assumptions, he has little difficulty in showing that the alleged necessary conception of God is really inconceivable.

The truth appears to be, first, that we have no philosophical conception or imagining of either infinitude or absoluteness, except through God's revelation of Himself as the Author of the universe. And secondly it appears to be, that nowhere does He, in making Himself known as the First Cause of all things, invite us to think of Him as being altogether without limit, or as existing in unchanging self-completeness. His infinitude seems to consist only in His having no limits such as we can conceive as necessary, no limits other than those which He is pleased to assign, in this or that direction, to Himself. And His absoluteness seems to consist only in His being independent of all causation, and determining for Himself His relations to all other existences. Such infinitude and such absoluteness, even if they contain the suggestion of a mystery passing comprehension, seem nevertheless, so far as they are definite ideas, to be quite intelligible: certainly they involve no contradictions. The limits and the relativity of the Supreme Being are fixed by and entirely known to Himself alone. In understanding this we understand the infinite, and we understand the absolute. For there is no idea of infinite, there is no idea of absolute, other than that which belongs to His own revealed Self.

With the dissolution of Mansel's clever dialectic there vanishes the ground of his unwise contention, that revela-

tion is not the proper object of too much scrutiny on the part of reason. His apology for difficulties of Christian doctrine, based on the inconceivability of the Being of God, and holding out no hope of a solution, appears to be essentially mistaken. It must be maintained, that revelation is not above or beyond the capacity of Divinely enlightened reason. Whatever new truth we may be called upon to believe, is or will be within our power to understand ; and whatever propositions are mentally or morally unintelligible, are not to be included in the contents of revelation. Especially must it be maintained, that the Christian revelation is a revelation of God, not merely as a righteous Governor, but as our intelligible and admirable Ideal. So far as we can see it in this light, we may be sure, not merely that it shows us God as He wishes to be known, but that it shows Him to us—imperfectly yet truly—as He in His moral beauty is. So far, on the other hand, as it may seem to be hopelessly impossible for us to so regard it, we are justified, we are more than justified, in not attempting to believe it.

VI. The Supreme God, although He is much more than the Power that manifests itself in nature, reveals Himself to us as that Power. “ In him we live, and move, and have our being ” (Acts xvii. 28). “ He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man ; that he may bring forth food out of the earth : and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread that strengtheneth man’s heart ” (Psalm civ. 14, 15). “ He sendeth out his commandment upon earth ; his word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool : he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels : who can stand before his cold ? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them : he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow ”

(Psalm cxlvii. 15—18). "The voice of the LORD cleaveth the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and strippeth the forests bare: and in his temple every thing saith, Glory. The LORD sat as king at the Flood; yea the LORD sitteth as king for ever. The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace" (Psalm xxix. 7—11).

Nature, accordingly, so far as we find in it unity of design and purpose, the expression of a single mind and will, partially discloses God. And here one point seems to call for special notice. There is in nature a disclosure of benevolence; but it is of a benevolence which, viewed in the light which streams from supernatural revelation and measured by a Christian standard, has the appearance of being very far from perfect. The world, in respect of the happiness which it affords to its inhabitants, seems unworthy of a God who had and has it in His power to frame it otherwise. We cannot but feel that there is a discrepancy between what nature tells us of the benevolence of its Author, and what He directly announces to us in the gospel. We miss the evidence, which we should like to see, of a protecting love that never fails, of a constant solicitude for the well-being of every creature that He has made. We are surrounded by countless instances of suffering, which seem to have neither remedial purpose nor prospect of compensation. But for us in this perplexity the same revelation, to which we owe our recognition of the imperfectness of Divine benevolence in nature, provides an explanation. The world of physical nature and of human life, as we now see it, is not an ultimate creation of God. It is preparatory to something higher. And the purpose, in our view imperfectly benevolent, of

the Power that manifests itself in nature may be looked upon, when we fail to find satisfaction in it, as only temporary and disciplinary, as subordinate to a higher purpose having its fulfilment in a future life. "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose" (Rom. viii. 28). "According to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 13).

God being the Power that manifests itself in nature, His Consciousness must, apparently, in some way pervade all nature—with, however, at least one exception, which will almost immediately be pointed out. What the exact character of His immanence may be, does not appear to be revealed to us. The operative force by which all things are sustained—is it a created force? or is it the very Spirit of the Creator? Is it, not only an expression of His thought, but also an expression of His life? If it is created, is God somehow present in it otherwise than by continued watchful guidance? If it is uncreated, is it or is it not identical with Divine Will? The answers to these questions appear to lie in a region beyond that of human knowledge. But it seems clear that, whatever they may be, whatever may be the character of the Divine Presence by which the normal course of nature is upheld, there is an additional and occasional, or more than occasional, operation of God's Spirit, manifest especially, if not entirely, in connection with His moral government of men.

Even within our universe God subjects Himself to limitation; He does not pervade the whole of His known creation. This, however it may be in the case of men's intellectual consciousness, seems quite clear in the case of the consciousness that wills. The human will is endowed by Him with some degree of independence of Himself.

He has given it a power of free choice even to resist Himself its Maker. He cannot, therefore, be normally present in it as He is in the other forces of the world. Nor does His Spirit, in that additional operation which has just been noticed, make His abode with it except by consent or invitation.

VII. A very important part of Christian faith in God is belief in the revealed doctrine of the Holy Trinity ; belief, that is, in the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, coupled with the belief that the three Persons together constitute but one God. While from a metaphysical point of view, if we attempt to carry this doctrine for examination into the region of metaphysics, it presents a mystery which for us is perhaps impenetrable, from a practical point of view there seems to be little difficulty in apprehending it sufficiently for intelligent belief. And it is as a practical doctrine, a doctrine revealed only so far as there is need of it for our moral life, that Scripture speaks of it. We are not invited to consider it as a theorem of metaphysics. There seems to be little difficulty in acknowledging each of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, when the manner of His operation is separately put before us, to be truly God, without at all regarding Him as a God distinct in His Godhead from the other two.

And indeed from a practical point of view the doctrine of the three Persons appears to be a help, rather than a hindrance, to clear and definite thought of God. It is sometimes easier to think of Him as Threefold than as Single. For so various is His revelation of Himself, that it is most difficult to entertain in one and the same act of consciousness a full conception of all that we know concerning Him. Contemplation, for example, of God seeking and saving one by one His erring people seems almost

to exclude contemporaneous thought of Him as the great God, awful in majesty and in holiness, whose habitation is eternity. And to be shown how we may to some extent classify His manifestations of Himself, assigning them to three distinct aspects of the Godhead, and dwelling upon each aspect separately, seems to make contemplation easier and apprehension more definite and sure. We can, apparently, without any inconsistency, quite well suppose that among the three Persons whom we separately acknowledge to be God there is, if not complete identity of Consciousness, at all events perfect sameness of Character together with absolute harmony of Will.

Concerning the assumption of offices by the several Persons of the Holy Trinity we seem to know enough to enable us to discriminate usefully between Them, and but little more. Scripture often speaks indifferently of the same work being performed by more than one of Them. The main substance of what is revealed to us appears to be as follows:—God, in so far as He is apprehended as the initiating Creator, Ruler, and Redeemer of mankind, as being Self-existing and having no limits to His Being other than those which He Himself may be pleased to assign, as watching with tender and righteous love over the creatures He has made, is God the Father. God, in so far as He is apprehended as the finite Power that manifests itself in nature, as the anthropomorphic Ideal of our humanity, as the self-abnegating Source and kingly Head of the new creation, as the Person through whom it ever is that man sees and has access to the Father, is God the Son, the Eternal Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. And God, in so far as He is apprehended as a visiting Spirit in the consciousness of men, instructing and quickening and supporting, is the third Person of the Trinity, God the Holy Ghost.

VIII. Knowledge of God, or intellectual belief in His revelation of Himself, involves in a manner, that is, as its natural and true correlative, a certain moral attitude towards Him; the intellectual and moral activities together constituting faith. We have seen in a previous chapter how it is that progressive knowledge of Him is dependent upon moral disposition; and we have now to notice how it is that moral disposition in its turn is the proper fruit of knowledge. Concerning the character of this moral disposition—which may, apparently, be briefly summed up in the words reverence and obedience—there seems to be no need to say anything in addition to the description already given in the last chapter of the former Book. A few words, however, will here be in place indicating the nature of the obligation to obedience under which we lie. What is said will in great measure apply to reverence also.

Obedience in response to God's early revelations of Himself is, as we have seen, a condition of His revelations being continued. They are all moral revelations given for the purpose of bringing human wills into loving submission to Himself. So long as man refuses to yield to calls already made, he is not in a position to receive any summons to yet higher service. To a certain extent it rests with man to determine whether or not God shall look upon him as His servant. To a certain extent it is in his power to avoid being troubled by God to make uncomfortable effort.

But, as regards those first calls to service which are not conditional upon any previous acceptance of an appointed task, as regards any calls, indeed, that are actually made, man cannot escape from obligation to obey. Obedience is not merely proposed to him by God as the condition of an advantageous intercourse with Himself; God does not

merely offer to raise him in the scale of being if he cares to undergo the toil of being raised ; but he is informed or reminded by God of a duty which he cannot leave undone without a marring, a deranging, a polluting of his existing moral nature. Deep in the foundations of his being lies the obligation, of which he becomes conscious, to obey his Creator and Moral Ideal so soon as he has any knowledge of Him. The obligation is a part of himself, a part which he can neither by any possibility divest himself of, nor disregard without the greatest injury to his being. It has its seat both among the motives which incite the will, and in the will which determines upon action. It is in part a component element of the life-force, in part one of the dispositions of the will. To obey the perceived commands of God is as reasonable, as natural, as it is to cherish one's own physical well-being, as it is to act justly in dealing with one's fellow men. Man can no more escape from the obligation to obedience, than he can feel it to be natural to ill-treat his body, than he can advocate the excellence and reasonableness of injustice.

We can in some measure avoid obedience to God's Will, but we can never escape from the obligation to obey. The obligation is a permanent element of our own being. Constraint is and ever must be on us to comply with such Divine injunctions as are present to the consciousness. So it has pleased the Supreme God to constitute our nature. "It is he that hath made us, and we are his ; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." Do we sometimes wish that He had made us otherwise ? Do we sometimes struggle against the hold that He keeps upon us ? Is it galling to feel that there is no ultimate and complete deliverance from the sense of being dominated by a Will superior to our own ? Let us, in this difficulty, remember that the dominating Will is the Will of One



who immeasurably loves, of One whose love it is that has formed us as we are—creatures having wills able to assert themselves in opposition to His own. So, having learned to appreciate the true meaning of such choice of action as He has given us, may we, with all the freedom that is ours, thankfully and restfully resign ourselves to Him ; resign ourselves to Him our Creator and Moral Ideal, who lovingly created us free agents in His own image for this very self-same perfect consummation.

## CHAPTER VII.

### JUSTIFYING FAITH.

I. IN the earlier chapters of this Book we have considered at some length the nature of justifying faith, or belief in the gospel revelation, regarded as an intellectual operation. We have now to investigate the moral significance and redemptive effect of this special manifestation of faith in God.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of reconciliation of man to God. It is a new revelation of Himself made by God to a world beginning to be ready to enter into closer relations with Him. The discipline of the human will had apparently reached, at the time of the advent of Jesus Christ, a certain definite and critical stage. It had so far proceeded that man was in a position to realize with strong self-condemnation that he had wantonly estranged himself from his Maker; and that in doing so he had debased his nature, and incurred just liability to penal suffering. He was prepared to find himself, on hearing the summons to repent, in dire need of rescue from sin and deliverance from its awful consequences. That need the gospel of Jesus Christ supplied, and still continues to supply.

The man, then, who has justifying faith is a man who gladly embraces the gospel scheme of salvation from sin and death. He is a man who is now seeking to serve God, but is conscious, not only of grievous and wilful

failure in the past, but also of inability to place himself for the future in right and happy relations towards his Maker. Having his eyes opened to the self-wrought degradation of his own moral being, he feels that he can never render to God the pure service that is His due: having obtained glimpses of the meaning of moral order, he is aware that he can never obliterate all the external evil that he has done, or free himself from just liability to consequential suffering. His faith in God, and his consciousness of sin, together cause him to welcome the announcements of the gospel. He learns therein that God has sent His Son into the world for the express purpose of supplying those moral needs of which he is so miserably conscious. He learns that the God whom he is anxious to serve, but whom he has so wofully offended, is a God of such unutterable love that He delivers up His Son to sacrifice in order that thereby mankind may be redeemed. He learns that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, having passed through death and through resurrection from the dead, and thus having accomplished the redemptive sacrifice to which by the Father He was delivered, has constituted Himself the living Head of a new society; and that this society is composed of persons transplanted from a state of hopeless defilement and dreadful liability to unknown pain to a state of growing to perfection and enjoying a sense of peace with God. He learns that admission to this society is by means of the newly-established rite of Christian baptism, wherein members signify their need of and their confidence in Christ's redemption, and their purpose to co-operate with Him by moral effort in the way of righteousness. And, having learned the substance of the gospel revelation, he gladly professes himself a follower of Christ, and becomes, by baptism, an enrolled citizen of the new kingdom of heaven.

The kingdom of heaven, or Christian Church, in loyal membership of which the desired redemption is to be found, is, as a saving refuge, the creation of Jesus Christ. It is the consequence, the reward, of His Passion. Further, as a visible society of men banded together for the common purpose of living the life of Christ's disciples, it owes its existence to His instructions. He it is who tells men what to do in order to be saved, after that by His Passion He has made their obedience efficacious. In this twofold circumstance we have ample ground—even if He stood in no other relation to the Church—for reverentially regarding Him as the Author of salvation. Hence justifying faith, which is an acceptance of the gospel at the hands of God, may be otherwise regarded as obedience to and trust in Jesus Christ. And there seems to be no ground, or no sufficient ground, for denying to this obedience and trust the title of faith in Christ. It is, however, only one kind of faith in Him: another kind, which more distinctively merits the name, has afterwards to be considered.

II. What, let us now inquire more particularly, is justification, or that redemption or salvation which ensues upon loyal membership of the Christian Church? What is the nature of that gift of righteousness which places the baptized Christian in an altogether new position in the sight of God? What is the method of the deliverance effected by Christ's Passion?

The gift is, as we have seen in our examination of the Epistle to the Romans, man's being indued by God with a potential righteousness. It is his becoming possessed of a power of gradually rising above the need of that Divine indulgence which accepts his feeble efforts in lieu of righteousness. It is his entrance upon a state of attaining to a full participation in that

perfect righteousness which was exemplified by Jesus Christ.

To know further the method or the means by which this gift of true righteousness attaches to membership of the Christian Church does not appear to be any essential part of justifying faith. The Gentile or the Jew, painfully conscious of his depravity, may be satisfied to learn from his instructor that the way of righteousness is certainly open to him on his becoming a convert to Christianity. And no less may the baptized Christian, from time to time repenting of his sins, find rest in hearing the assurance of the preacher, that righteousness is still possible for him in consequence of his membership of a Church which Christ purchased with His blood. How it is that escape from sin and sinfulness is procurable within, but not outside, the Church's fold, it does not seem to be necessary for the penitent to know. He must, indeed, recognize the Church as a school of righteousness, and constitute himself a willing disciple in that school. He must, moreover, place reliance upon the promised aid of the Holy Spirit to further his efforts to follow in Christ's footsteps. He must, too, acknowledge that he in some way owes his state of justification, in which he has peace with God and can aim at spiritual improvement with full assurance of complete success, to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But what is the exact connection between the Saviour's Passion and the moral restoration of the Christian convert, it does not seem to be at all essential for him to understand.

Nevertheless thoughtful persons who feel themselves constrained to search into this matter are by no means left by Scripture without illumination. The New Testament seems to disclose to careful inquiry an intelligible philosophy of the subject. A clear scheme of salvation

appears to be partially unfolded, which on several grounds commends itself to reason. This we may proceed to consider.

There can, apparently, be little or no reasonable doubt, that the state of justification spoken of by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans is the exact equivalent of the life of hopeful and ultimately successful struggle after righteousness there and elsewhere depicted by him. This life of the Christian convert he unmistakably regards as in great measure new. It is a life which dates only from the reception of the rite of baptism; it is a life which has been preceded by a solemn act of renunciation of forbidden practices; it is a life of which the key-note may be said to be the substitution of heavenly things for earthly as objects of endeavour. "Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 3, 4). "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 1—3).

There is, we go on to notice, a remarkable consensus among apostolic writers in looking upon the Christian life as a new state of being. So new is it in their regard, that they speak of it unhesitatingly as resulting from a new creation or new birth. In evidence of this the following passages may be quoted. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot

enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3, 5). 'As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13). "Lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. iii. 9, 10). "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James i. 18). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth" (1 Pet. i. 22, 23).

It appears, then, to be the case that man's justification, or capability of becoming actually righteous in the sight of God, is dependent upon his being, in baptism, literally and truly born again. The statements of New Testament writers concerning this seem clear and positive; there is no sufficient ground at all for assuming them to be metaphorical. Converts, it appears, on admission to the Christian Church, are, by the special operation of the Holy Spirit, 'delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son.' They enter upon a state of existence in which they are naturally subject to new conditions. They stand, as creatures, in a new relation to God the Creator. New possibilities of holiness are opened to them, new aims and efforts are required of them, new prospects of eternal glory are placed before them. They are by God's great mercy rescued from the hopeless imperfection of their fallen

nature, they are at once raised to a loftier state of being, they are literally and truly born again.

III. How far, now, can it be said that this Scriptural doctrine of a literal new birth commends itself to sound reason? It will not, indeed, be on all hands admitted that the Scriptural doctrine is such as has been described. There are those who will maintain that the notices of a new birth are only metaphorical; having reference, it may be to an awakening of dormant aspirations or to a recognition and pursuit of new ideals, it may be to a deliberate and permanent turning of the will in the direction of loyalty to God. And doubtless there is some truth in the view, that changes such as these are sufficiently involved in conversion to Christianity to be reasonably regarded as the characteristics of it, and sufficiently marked, as changes, to merit the appellation of new birth. There is truth, moreover, in the contention that in the absence of these higher states of consciousness a literal new birth can in no wise justify.

Nevertheless it must be held that renewals such as these have not that immediate and necessary dependence upon the Passion of our Lord which justification or new birth obviously has in the minds of New Testament writers. Scriptural new birth must certainly be something other than and more than they. Further, there are sound philosophical considerations pointing to the literal new birth of Christians as a real fact of history. Three such considerations may here be put before the reader.

(1) The hypothesis of a veritable new creation or new birth can alone carry with it adequate assurance that true righteousness, or faultlessness of conduct, is attainable. To one who is conversant with the phenomena of sin, and has appreciation of the principle of heredity, it is sufficiently apparent that the moral nature of every human



being born into the world is in a measure hopelessly disordered. It seems clearly to be the case, that there is in man's moral constitution, as it was first created, no provision for complete recovery from the disorganization introduced by illegitimate indulgence of self-will. No after steadfast determination of the will to strive persistently towards perfection can make the attainment of perfection possible to any member of the unregenerate posterity of Adam.

If this is so, and if the conception of God entertained by the repentant sinner is of a God to whom unrighteousness is abhorrent, it cannot be satisfying to hear of a state of justification which is no more than a state of moral encouragement and discipline. The reflecting mind needs assurance of the bestowal of a new principle of life, capable of so developing as to destroy every element of evil that has its abode in the unrenewed nature. It may, indeed, be contended that a re-creation after death would fully satisfy this moral and mental need, since there is no question of the attainment by any one of perfection in this present life. But although the evidence, drawn from human need, that re-creation actually takes place in history is thus weakened, it is by no means destroyed. Baptism shares with some undefined moment after death the probability of being, for each member of the Church, a morally creative epoch.

(2) The doctrine of the new birth apparently has some analogy with that of the first creation of mankind. There seems to be good ground for supposing, that man originally differed from some selected anthropoid ape only in having implanted in him, by God's creative act, the germ of a new moral and spiritual nature. His pre-Christian or non-Christian supereminence is, apparently, the result of a long process of development in a sphere from which the

lower animals are quite shut out. And it appears to be no more strange a thing, if Christians are separated from the rest of human kind, and set apart for continuous development to perfection, by means of another creative act, implanting in them the unseen germ of a new and perfect moral life.

As regards the virtual production of a new race in the first creation, and the production of new individuals only in the second, this distinction is also not without its analogue. It seems to be quite in harmony with the difference, with which we are familiar, between God's two methods of revealing Himself to men. In nature, for the general ordering of their lives as rational and moral beings, He imparts a certain knowledge of His ways which is a common possession of mankind ; but for purposes of higher discipline He makes Himself known to individuals one by one.

(3) The two considerations just urged—viz. man's apparent need of moral reconstruction, and an apparent analogy between such reconstruction and other dealings of God with the human race—are *a priori* reasons for accepting the New Testament doctrine of baptismal regeneration. We may now further notice that *a posteriori* evidence of the truth of the doctrine is by no means wanting. There is, for persons who are in a position to appreciate it, strong experiential ground for thinking that the moral nature of the Christian is not identical with that of persons outside the Church.

There are no doubt persons, who are Christians in name, and yet exist in a state of moral degradation lower than that of many a pagan tribe. But so also we read of savages in whose case the endowment of a human nature seems to have had little or no effect in raising them morally above the brutes. The germ of the new nature

bestowed in baptism, no less than the incipient life of humanity supposed to have been implanted in the ape, needs attention and cultivation for its development and the production of its proper fruit. It is no sufficient argument against the regeneration of Christian baptism, to urge that in a vast multitude of cases no sign of any results of regeneration can be discovered. The absence, in the case of large numbers of baptized persons, of distinguishing marks of moral elevation is fully consistent with the truth of the doctrine we are considering. If in the best of individuals the new life is only gradually developed, so that in early childhood a large part of conduct is scarcely if at all affected by it, it need scarcely surprise us if in the earlier stages of the Church's history there are members who, though in infancy they have been admitted into the fold, yet remain untouched, or almost untouched, by the new spirit of the Church's life. They have not, it may be, received from those who made themselves responsible for their baptism the after attention to which they are entitled ; and consequently they exhibit no fruits of a regenerated nature. The Church as a body, no less than the regenerate individuals of which it is composed, appears to be an organism which only develops gradually its spiritual and moral life. It has, in its youth, very imperfect notions of its obligations to its members.

But the circumstance of the deplorable condition of many persons who are said to be regenerate, though it is thus shown to have no direct force as an argument in disproof of a real regeneration, cannot but throw some discredit on an appeal to the evidential value of the good fruits of Christianity. It being admitted—as all reasonable persons must admit—that the moral life of the Christian Church is much superior to that of any other large community, it may nevertheless with some plausi-

bility be contended, that this is otherwise explicable than by the hypothesis of a baptismal new birth. It may be maintained, that the moral superiority of Christians is by no means so great as not to be adequately accounted for by the operation of the Church as a school of righteousness.

Not, therefore, at all relying upon the mere outward fruits of Christianity as the evidence of a reconstructed nature, let us turn our attention to another point. Let us notice something of the ends and aims which characterize the conduct of an advanced Christian. His professed objects of endeavour are manifestly not the same as those of other men. Nor is it merely that his ideals are higher, as they become higher in the course of a progressive and orderly development ; in some respects they so far transcend the old ideals as to be violently antagonistic to them. There is in his moral constitution a new element, the appearance of which cannot be satisfactorily accounted for by any hypothesis of moral progress naturally made.

The conception of internal conflict in man's moral nature is one with which experience renders us quite familiar. But the idea which most commonly presents itself to the mind is that of a struggle between motives connected with pleasure on the one side, and motives connected with duty on the other side. The fact, however, must not be overlooked, that the two classes of motives also have private rivalry among themselves. Strife among motives connected with duty is the special point with which we are now about to be concerned.

Of this strife or contention three forms may be noticed. First, particular occasions constantly arise, when the performance of one acknowledged duty happens to be at the moment incompatible with the performance of another ; as when beneficence conflicts with justice, or family business

with official work. Secondly, it is a natural part or accompaniment of change and progress, that some moral motives should increase in strength and make more imperious demands upon the will, while others resent the being deprived of indulgence to which they have been accustomed ; as, for example, when the youthful duty of taking abundant physical exercise comes to be interfered with by the duty of working steadily at a profession, or the duty of showing compassion to the poor by means of alms is checked in its operation by the more rational duty of having regard to their ultimate well-being. Thirdly, there are motives, such as those urging to self-preservation and to devotion to the common good, between which—though they may often be at peace, and may even aid each other—there is, in the nature of the Christian, and not in the nature of men in general, an element of permanent and fundamental opposition. As an illustration of this, let it suffice to mention the obligation which men feel to avenge an injury, and the counter-obligation, which can in no wise be ignored by Christians, to extend forgiveness to a repentant injurer.

In conflict of the first and second kinds that have been mentioned there appears to be nothing whatever inconsistent with the notion of established order in the organism in which it takes place. If one motive of duty comes into collision with another, it is owing to external circumstances not providing satisfaction for both at once, or to the fact that in the nature of things the time has come for an easily-made re-adjustment of their relative positions. But in the third kind of struggle there is an element of hostility which is incongruous with the idea of organic unity. Here the conflicting motives proclaim themselves members of diverse organisms. They represent different conceptions of the purpose of existence. Between justice

and beneficence, between physical exercise and professional industry, there is no permanent quarrel, though now and again there may be mutual interference. But between private vengeance and Christian forgiveness there can be no conciliation. Forgiveness demands that vengeance be annihilated.

It is, then, here contended, that irreconcilable warfare between two sets of motives, each set claiming to be the representative of fundamental duty, is good evidence of the Christian's new birth. It is evidence of the introduction into his nature of a new principle of life, the life-principle of a different organism from that of disordered human nature. "If men have suffered evil," says Aristotle, "they seek to return it; if not, if they cannot requite an injury, we count their condition slavish." "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth," says the Mosaic law. To this pagan and this Jewish conception of fundamental duty our Lord opposes an altogether new principle: "Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." This principle, it is insisted, together with others allied to it, is so utterly at variance with men's natural intuitions of virtuous behaviour, that it could not be at all entertained as an obligatory rule of conduct, if there were not in the moral constitution of the Christian some germ of a new organic life in which the sacrifice of individual will has its proper and transcendent home.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FAITH OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

I. REVELATION does not limit our knowledge of the new birth to the mere fact of it as a suitable and explanatory phenomenon of Christian life. We are permitted to understand something of the reconstructing process that takes place in human nature.

The secret of the new birth is contained in that final body of instructions which our Lord delivered to His disciples at the close of His earthly ministry. He is, apparently, speaking to them throughout in anticipation of the needs and status of His nascent Church. He reveals to them truths, only now becoming truths as consequences of His Passion, concerning the life which His followers would have to lead. He shows how new duties would fall upon them, how new sources of strength would be opened to them. He pictures the Father looking upon them with still greater love, and granting still greater things in answer to their prayers; and the Holy Spirit abiding ever with them to comfort and instruct. And the ground of their new duties, and of their new relation to the Father and the Holy Spirit, is apparently a new bond by which henceforward they were to be most intimately connected with Himself. Henceforward—after the accomplishment of His Passion—He, having returned to the Father, and they, by words and by deeds of loving

ministration bearing witness of Him, were to live in the close attachment of organic union.

Here is His announcement :—"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away : and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches : He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit : for apart from me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ; and so shall ye be my disciples " (John xv. 1—8).

Besides this clear declaration by our Lord of organic union between Himself and His Church, we have passages in St. Paul's Epistles enunciating, under another figure, the same wonderful truth. Christ is portrayed as the Head of a body of which His people are the members. " Even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office : so we, who are many, are one body in Christ " (Rom. xii. 4, 5). " Ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof " (1 Cor. xii. 27). " He gave some to be apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ : till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the



measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ : that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error ; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, which is the head, even Christ ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love " (Eph. iv. 11—16).

We have reason to know, then, that there is implanted at his baptism, in each member of Christ's Church, a germ of a new nature which forms an actual part of the glorified human nature of Jesus Christ. This germ, constituting a new element in the life-force, is, it appears, given us to cultivate ; and we may not unreasonably believe that it is destined so to grow and make way under cultivation, that it will eventually supplant, and so exterminate from our present nature, every root of imperfection and disorder.

II. The principle of new life which is implanted in the nature of the baptized Christian is the life-force of an organic body, at present most incomplete, which consists of Jesus Christ in glorified human form, together with all members of His Church in so far as the new principle has become operative in them. This life-force, like the life-force of man's ordinary nature, contains among its constituents motives urging to the performance of certain kinds of voluntary action. For the purpose of this discussion there is no need to discriminate among them ; they may be summed up together as a compound motive urging in one way or another to the practice of Christlike conduct. Let us call this motive—a motive placing obligation or constraint upon the will to execute its behests—the constraint of conformity to the life of Christ. In the

case of every baptized Christian, in so far as he has come to participate in the corporate life of the Church of which he is a member, obedience to the constraint of conformity to the life of Christ is the substitute for what in natural morals we call virtue.

The constraint of conformity to the life of Christ, implanted only in germ in the old nature, takes its place, as a new constituent of the life-force, among the moral motives. It is destined, apparently, if it is duly cultivated, so to develop as to exterminate all other motives that are not in harmony with it; so that in time to come the moral character and conduct of every member of Christ's Church will be no less perfect than those of Christ Himself. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25—27).

At present, however, this new motive is one of a system of motives many of which are more or less antagonistic to itself. It is by indulging it, or striving to indulge it, that it is cultivated by the will, and that it gradually acquires increased strength and influence. As in the progress of the natural man benevolence and love of justice obtain a mastery over low forms of animal desire, so in the progress of the renewed man the constraint of conformity to the life of Christ, taken by the will into close alliance with itself, gradually eclipses all those motives the indulgence of which would perpetuate disorder.

In the will thus working in close alliance with the constraint of conformity to the life of Christ, we seem to have the explanation of that kind of faith which in the former Book has been spoken of as a faith of attachment

to the risen Christ. The constraint urging the will with more or less persistency and force in the direction of Christlike conduct, and the will intent upon subjecting the general body of motives to the power of the constraint, together form a disposition of will and motive which leads the baptized Christian to live as far as possible the corporate life of the Christian Church; the Fount of which life is the glorified human nature of its Divine Head. They are a disposition of will and motive which recognizes Christ, not only as the Church's Founder, but as the perpetual Source and Well-spring of the Church's being, Himself sharing with every individual member of it in one common organic life. The union on which this faith is based is a union of such closeness, of such identity of existence, that Christ, the Head, may be truly said to be Himself living in each faithful member of His Church; in so far, that is, as the new principle of life has at any time succeeded in establishing its position.

The faith which we now have under consideration may, it would seem, be fitly designated the faith of union with Christ. It is a faith by which its possessor, united to Christ, strives to share with Him more and more in one common organic life. It is, moreover, a faith which, in so far as he strives successfully, produces as its own proper fruit conduct that is, like that of Christ, truly righteous, really faultless in the sight of God.

III. We have thus far considered the principle of new life only in its aspect of a moral force influencing the will. But it may well be that it operates also in other ways than this. Developed by means of determinations of the will, the effect of its development may not unreasonably be supposed to extend to other constituents of human nature besides the system of conscious motives. We seem to be taught that, after death, man's body will through its

agency be transformed ; and we seem to be taught that it is now not without influence in the region of pure thought. The modification of thought which, being due to it, is an apparent manifestation of faith is what it is here proposed to notice.

The man who has the faith of union with Christ seems to be indued with a clearness of insight into spiritual things exceeding that of other men. He seems to have an affinity for spiritual truth, and a certainty of conviction of the truth of what he sees, which are extra-natural. Let St. Paul and St. John be witnesses. "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth ; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him ; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him ? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 13—16). "Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things. . . . As for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you ; but as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him" (1 John ii. 20, 27).

Let us here take further notice of Green's protest, already touched upon in Chapter III., against attaching religious importance to assent to Christian dogma. Having before us, as we now have, spiritual insight as a consequence of the faith of union with Christ, we are able to realize both the strength and the weakness of one of his positions. The position appears to be substantially

this :—Belief in dogma is the result of real Christian faith, instead of real Christian faith being, as is commonly supposed, the result of belief in dogma. He writes as follows :—

“The practical Christian faith is thoroughly at one with itself. It is not in it, but in the current theological conception of it, that there lies the contradiction of which I have previously spoken. An assent to propositions upon evidence is no intrinsic element in it, nor that on which it ultimately depends. Its object is not past events, but a present reconciled and indwelling God. Its interest in the work of Christ is in this as a *finished* work ; i.e. in present relations with God which Christ’s work is thought to have rendered possible. It is no doubt historically conditioned : but it is not on an intellectual estimate of its own conditions that it depends for being what it is. Without the Christian tradition it would not have been what it is, but a judgment as to the authenticity of that tradition, though it has hitherto followed from it almost as a matter of course, is not essential to it as a spiritual state. It is upon the formation of a theory about faith that it comes to be regarded as necessarily dependent on assent to propositions concerning past events. Controversy compels the faithful to justify their faith. In its true nature faith can be justified by nothing but itself. Like the consciousness of God and duty—of which indeed it is but another mode—it is a primary formative principle, which cannot be deduced or derived from anything else. Any apparent derivation of it is inevitably a circular process. This, however, is what the understanding is slow to admit. It seeks for an explanatory antecedent of faith just as it might of any event in nature. Hence as Christian theology supervened on Christian faith, the latter, pressed for its reason why, could only appeal to the osten-

sible facts embodied in the tradition of the Church ; which was in effect to ascribe its origin to an assent given in the past to a certain interpretation of certain events, while in truth both interpretation and assent were the result of the faith supposed to be derived from them. Faith thus comes to found itself, or rather to suppose itself founded, upon dogma : i.e. upon propositions representing neither demonstrable truths of science, nor ultimate conditions necessary to the possibility of experience and knowledge, nor formative ideas of reason, nor imperatives of morality, but either miraculous transactions, or deductions from and explanations of those supposed transactions.”<sup>1</sup>

In the light of the distinction that exists between justifying faith and the faith of union with Christ the dialectical difficulty presented by Green seems to vanish. It is no circular argument, to affirm that the faith of union with Christ is dependent upon justifying faith, or rational belief in dogma, and at the same time to say that belief in dogma, in the form of spiritual insight, is a product of the faith of union with Christ. It is, apparently, no more a circular argument than it would be to put together these two statements—The boy’s love of books led to his father sending him to the university, and, The university training which as a young man he received accounts for his critical appreciation of English literature.

IV. The faith in Christ which is other than justifying faith is, as we have had occasion to notice in the former Book, the faith which is spoken of by St. Paul as working through love. The entire propriety of this description is now apparent, since the Godlike life, and therefore the Christlike life, is above all things a life of love. The Christian, being in organic union with his Lord, manifests love as the truest expression of his new nature. Upon

<sup>1</sup> Philosophical Works, vol. iii., p. 263.

love, regarded as the special characteristic of the Christian life, it is desirable that a few remarks should be made; and with them our discussion of religious faith may close.

Union with Christ, or membership with Him of one organic body, necessarily involves organic union of Christians among themselves. "We, who are many," says St. Paul, "are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5). And this common membership one of another he presents as being in itself a new ground of social morality. "That ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth. Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbour: for we are members one of another" (Eph. iv. 22—25).

The new social morality, consisting in the exercise of Christlike love, is the furtherance in every possible way of the well-being of the Christian Church, into which we have been baptized. In so far as we have at any time become real partakers of its organic life, the pursuit of private aims and interests inconsistent with the common good has no place whatever in our motives and resolves. We live, not now as individuals, not now as persons whose own happiness or self-preservation is the all-sufficient ultimate end of conduct, but as members of a whole, as persons of whom it is characteristic to recognize corporate well-being as the true ultimate end of all endeavour. The good of the community is not, indeed, an end which the agent must have continually and consciously before him; but it is an end which, besides being

in some degree positively and deliberately pursued, must be acknowledged to have a paramount claim to preference over all others when it is seen to be inconsistent with them. Christian morality demands the individual's entire sacrifice of himself to the good of the community, whenever a way for such sacrifice is open to him. "A new commandment," says our Lord, "I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John xiii. 34).

But advocacy of lofty self-suppression is not, let it be observed, confined in these days to Christian moralists. That is to say, advocacy of it is not always based on Christian grounds. There are teachers who, though they are quite willing to allow that it is an ideal introduced by Christ, and perfectly realized in practice by Him as by no other of the sons of men, nevertheless affirm that it has its justification in natural human reason.

Now this contention cannot for a moment be admitted. No explanation of the duty of Christian self-sacrifice, other than its derivation from the new birth, seems at all capable of being sustained. Even that religious position, not unfamiliar to the student of modern theological literature, which makes a conception of the natural brotherhood of men follow from that of the Fatherhood of God, is wholly inadequate to explain the reasonableness of Christ's new commandment. For brothers, though they are bound to one another by ties of considerable closeness, do not at all appear to be called upon to subordinate all private ends to the family well-being. And in any system of thought, which professes and appears to exhibit Christian self-sacrifice as a purely rational procedure, independent of the new birth, there is certainly discoverable, either some fallacy of argument, or some considerable imperfection in the self-sacrifice enjoined.



And even—we may go on to notice—if natural human thought could vindicate Christian self-sacrifice as a rational duty or ideal, yet nowhere but in the Christian Church could the attempt to realize it usefully and widely be other than profoundly hopeless. Who, amid the complexities of human life, can satisfy himself by the light of unaided human reason that any projected sacrifice of private ends, that are not distinctly anti-social, will really promote the well-being of the community he would fain serve? Who, again, if at some moment the way to really difficult self-sacrifice should seem clear before him, could in the unaided strength of human motives and human reason withstand the strong natural obligation to preserve his own happiness? Surely, for any corresponding good result to follow from man's apprehension of Christian self-sacrifice as obligatory or as ideal conduct, the presence of God the Holy Ghost, the Inspiring Force of the Christlike life, is most essential—essential for guidance and essential for the strength needful to overcome.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,” says our Lord, “if ye have love one to another” (John xiii. 35). The fact that men can and do love one another, in the sense of the new commandment, is evidence of the truth of Christian doctrine. It is evidence of the actual introduction upon earth of a new principle of Divine life. If men can and do exhibit in some real measure—however miserably imperfect—that absolutely self-renouncing love with which Christ loves His Church, it is evidence that there is such a thing as a new creation. It is evidence—for nowhere outside the Church's pale can such love be found—that baptized members of the Church are indeed the body of Christ, sharing with Him in the organic life of which He is the Source, and in the power of that life gradually putting on His righteousness.

## CHAPTER IX.

### DR. MARTINEAU.

I. DR. MARTINEAU has little regard for the New Testament theology. For him the religious value of the book is contained in certain selected features of the portraiture of Jesus by the three Synoptists. The moral character of Jesus, not in every particular as it is exhibited by them, but in those points in which it cannot but be acknowledged to be superior to their imaginings, is, among the contents of the New Testament Scriptures, that which is helpful to the religious life. And God's revelation of Himself to Jesus, issuing in this sublimity of character, is the only special revelation at the base of Christianity. The Christian religion is simply the religion practised by Jesus: it has no dependence upon doctrines concerning his person and his work.

A rule is given by Dr. Martineau "for separating the divine from the human in the origin of our religion." "The former," he says, "will be found, if anywhere, in what Jesus of Nazareth *himself was*, in spiritual character and moral relation to God. The latter will be found in what *was thought about* his person, functions, and office. It was the Providence of history that gave us *him*: it was the men of history that dressed up the *theory* of him: and till we compel the latter to stand aside, and let us through to look upon his living face, we can never seize the per-

manent essence of the gift.”<sup>1</sup> He presently goes on to write thus: “To draw forth the objective truth from behind this mist of prepossessions, we are thrown entirely upon internal evidence. And however great may be the room thus left for fanciful combinations, there are some critical rules which when applied with competent historical feeling can hardly mislead us. The problem before us is amenable to the following three. They are stated with exclusive reference to the synoptical gospels, as the source of all that can be known of the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth.

“1. Whenever, during or before the ministry of Jesus, any person in the narrative is made to speak in language, or refer to events, which had their origin at a later date, the report is incredible as an anachronism.

“2. Miraculous events cannot be regarded as adequately attested, in presence of natural causes accounting for belief in their occurrence.

“3. Acts and words ascribed to Jesus which plainly transcend the moral level of the narrators authenticate themselves as his: while such as are out of character with his spirit, but congruous with theirs, must be referred to inaccurate tradition.”<sup>2</sup>

The negative results of his criticism of Scriptural doctrine he sums up in the following words. “As I look back on the foregoing discussions, a conclusion is forced upon me on which I cannot dwell without pain and dismay: viz., that Christianity, as defined or understood in all the Churches which formulate it, has been mainly evolved from what is transient and perishable in its sources: from what is unhistorical in its traditions, mythological in its preconceptions, and misapprehended in the oracles of its prophets. From the fable of Eden to the imagination

<sup>1</sup> The Seat of Authority in Religion, p. 575.

<sup>2</sup> p. 577.

of the last trumpet, the whole story of the Divine order of the world is dislocated and deformed. The blight of birth-sin with its involuntary perdition; the scheme of expiatory redemption with its vicarious salvation; the incarnation, with its low postulates of the relation between God and man, and its unworkable doctrine of two natures in one person; the official transmission of grace through material elements in the keeping of a consecrated corporation; the second coming of Christ to summon the dead and part the sheep from the goats at the general judgment;—all are the growth of a mythical literature, or Messianic dreams, or Pharisaic theology, or sacramental superstition, or popular apotheosis.”<sup>1</sup>

“But,” he presently proceeds, “in turning to the historical residue from these inquiries, I am brought to a further conclusion in which I rest with peace and hope: viz., that Christianity, understood as the personal religion of Jesus Christ, stands clear of all the perishable elements, and realizes the true relation between man and God. . . . It is only in the sphere of mundane phenomena that a Revealer needs to *know more* than we: in the sphere of Divine things the requirement is, that he *be better*, and, in the order of his affections and the secrets of his will, make more approach to the supreme Perfection. This intervening position it is which alone renders the function of a Mediator,—Uplifter,—Inspirer,—possible: and *that*, not *instead of immediate* revelation, but simply as making us more aware of it and helping us to interpret it. For in the very constitution of the human soul there is provision for an immediate apprehension of God. But often in the transient lights and shades of conscience we pass on and ‘know not *who* it is’: and not till we see in another the victory which shames our own defeat, and are caught up

<sup>1</sup> p. 650.

by enthusiasm for some realized heroism or sanctity, do the authority of right and the beauty of holiness come home to us as 'an appeal literally Divine. The train of the conspicuously righteous in their several degrees are for us the real angels that pass to and fro on the ladder that reaches from earth to heaven. And if Jesus of Nazareth, in virtue of the characteristics of his spirit, holds the place of Prince of Saints, and perfects the conditions of the pure religious life, he thereby reveals the highest possibilities of the human soul, and their dependence upon habitual communion between man and God."<sup>1</sup>

II. Another passage may be quoted in order to present more completely Dr. Martineau's view of the relation between God and Jesus, and between Jesus and his fellow men. "In the spiritual experience of nations and of races there are mighty paroxysms which break through the restraints of this law" (of historical causation), "when, as at the Christian era, a new type of mind and character, a fresh creation of moral beauty bursts into blossom at an ungenial time, like a delicate flower from a rotting soil; or when, as in the seventh century, a people scarcely reckoned in the statistics of civilization starts into organized existence, and with fiery magnanimity sweeps over half the world as the missionary of a perishing truth; or when, as at the minor crises which have given birth to Protestant sects, whole populations have been carried off their feet by affections never felt before, and as truly remodelled, in habit, thought, and aspect, as if they had risen from the dead. . . . It is not merely with a stand against declension, with a tenacity of right habit in resistance to decay, with a protest of unspoiled feeling against sinking life, that we have here to deal; *this*, perhaps, the inertia of lingering goodness already there might sufficiently explain:

<sup>1</sup> p. 652.

but it is the positive creation of fresh images of perfection, a recoil from the lower which already carries in it dreams of the higher, an expostulation with the present, which, not content with seeing the better past, presses into a previously unimagined future. This dawning of unsuspected lights within rare and exceptional natures is no mere human phenomenon, explicable by our reciprocal mental action : it betrays the overarching presence of brighter skies. Among the societies of men, it is ever the greater spirits that morally sustain the less ; and, as the scale of realized excellence ascends, the conscience of us all is ashamed to linger, and eventually rises too. We are lifted by the souls of mightier wing, and are set where otherwise our feet would not have climbed : and, were we without this hierarchy of moral ranks, there would be nothing ennobling in our interdependence ; and no healing would flow down, no reverence pass up, from link to link. Once upon the flat, upon the flat we stay. But what, then, is it that sustains the *summit-minds* ? that kindles them with light they cannot borrow, and fires them with strength that no man can lend ? Have they escaped the law of dependence, and become original springs, first inventors, of a non-existent righteousness ? . . . . No : they feel, not less, but far more, than others, the law of objective contact with higher mind as the condition of moral insight and spiritual power ; and unless we charge our highest witnesses with illusions in that which is especially their own, and so reject whatever we have that is supremely trustworthy, we must carry that law beyond our mutual relations, and recognize the fires of God in the glow which kindles the summits of this world.”<sup>1</sup>

Our religious dependence, then, upon Jesus Christ is the dependence of persons who are morally dull and weak

<sup>1</sup> p. 74.

upon one whom Divine Providence has endowed with exceptional clear-sightedness and strength. The value of his example is immense, its encouragement is indispensable ; but still his influence does but quicken powers of which we are—potentially if not actually—already in possession. “Divine guidance,” says Dr. Martineau, “has never and nowhere failed to men ; nor has it ever, in the most essential things, largely differed amongst them : but it has not always been recognized as divine, much less as the living contact of Spirit with spirit—the communion of affection between God and man. While conscience remained an *impersonal law*, stern and silent, with only a jealous Nemesis behind, man had to stand up alone, and work out for himself his independent magnanimity ; and he could only be the pagan hero. When conscience was found to be inseparably blended with the Holy Spirit, and to speak in tones immediately divine, it became the very shrine of worship : its strife, its repentance, its aspirations, passed into the incidents of a living drama, with its crises of alienation and reconciliation ; and the cold obedience to a mysterious necessity was exchanged for the *allegiance of personal affection*. And this is the true emergence from the darkness of ethical law to the tender light of the life divine. The veil falls from the shadowed face of moral authority, and the directing love of the all-holy God shines forth.”<sup>1</sup>

If now we notice that he contemplates the follower of Christ as being drawn by him “to think his thought, and bear his cross, and pray his prayer,”<sup>2</sup> we shall, perhaps, see with sufficient clearness Dr. Martineau’s general position.

There are three chief points to be borne in mind. The first is, that God reveals Himself in each man’s conscience,

<sup>1</sup> p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> p. 575.

though the individual may not recognize the voice that speaks to him as the Voice of God. The second is, that Jesus, the recipient of an extraordinary degree of moral illumination, is, by virtue of his character, an indirect revealer to his fellow men of moral truth. The third is, that there is need only of an enlightened conscience to enable man, if he will, to live in close communion with God, and attain at length to the righteousness of Jesus.

This presentation of Christianity, this substitute for the rejected doctrine of the New Testament Scriptures, is the work of an earnest and eminent philosopher, and as such deserves consideration. Is it possible, we may inquire, for the three points just mentioned to be combined into a system of religious truth which can be accepted by us as a satisfactory alternative to the theology of the New Testament? Can they be exhibited as fundamental principles of a philosophy of religion, which shall be intelligible, self-consistent, and explanatory of facts? Is there indeed a true method of divesting ourselves of sin and sinfulness, and attaining to the perfection of the Christlike life, altogether independent of the dogmas of the Apostles' Creed? Our investigation of this matter may conveniently be divided into three parts. We may seek to ascertain, first, who or what is the God that, according to Dr. Martineau, reveals himself in each man's conscience; secondly, what is the nature of the human conscience by which Jesus and his fellow men are said to apprehend Him; and thirdly, in what manner apprehension of Him by conscience can be shown to be completely efficacious as the means to holiness.

III. God, as represented to us by Dr. Martineau, the God whose revelation of Himself as exhibited in the New Testament theology is treated as a figment, appears to be only a finite Being; although, in consequence of a



common ambiguity of language, he is able to speak of Him as infinite while not conceiving Him as other than finite. Three ways there seem to be in which His attributes fall short of the conception entertained by Christian theology of the Lord Jehovah. In the first place, He is coeval with the world of which He is acknowledged to be the Creator. In the second place, it is only with some restriction of the meaning of the operation that the 'creation' of the world can be ascribed to Him. In the third place, His creative and guiding Will is not apprehended as being in itself the efficient and sufficient Cause of all things.

(1) A "great discovery of modern science," writes Dr. Martineau, "is the immense extension of the universe *in time*."<sup>1</sup> "So long," he presently continues, "as the world was supposed to be only ten-score generations old, it was easy enough to separate the provinces of God and Nature. There was a definite date imagined at which its powers were set to work and put in charge of the order of things, and, prior to that date, nothing in existence but his lonely infinitude. Different domains of time were thus marked off as receptacles of supernatural and of natural existence; and, though the Divine life continued all through, its activities were regarded as delegated since the creative hour; and human piety, in order to stand face to face with its supreme object, had to fling itself back into the abyss of duration 'before the mountains were brought forth, or ever he had formed the earth and the world.' . . . Natural forces were installed in full possession of the cosmos in time, and the Divine Will was prefixed to it to be its origin."<sup>2</sup>

"When, therefore," he continues, "it appeared that no commencement could be found; that cosmical time goes

<sup>1</sup> p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> p. 19.

back through all that had been called eternity ; that for the prefix of an almighty fiat no vacancy could be shown, the natural forces seemed to have secured the system of things all to themselves, and to leave no room for their first appearance in succession to an earlier power. . . . But . . . though the natural forces have lost their birthday, and seem to be old enough for any thing, they gain no higher character by their extension of time ; and do not, by losing their sequence of date, lose their dependence of nature. . . . The reasons for recognizing the Infinite Mind as supreme cause are in no way superseded by the *age* of this or any other globe. . . . The added duration extends the claims of both agencies alike, the natural and the divine ; it enables neither to extrude the other ; but it obliges us to revise the relation in which we had placed them to one another. They can no longer be treated as successive in time.”<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Martineau, it may be pointed out, is arguing in favour of retaining a belief in God as the Author of the universe, notwithstanding the circumstance that modern science shows that He cannot have existed before the universe. But what we are just now concerned with is the solidity of the ground for this supposed and accepted allegation of modern science. Clearly it seems to have its origin in a fallaciously ambiguous employment of the term infinite. The millions of years which science postulates, basing its calculations upon evidence of sense, are but a length of time indefinitely large. And, though in popular language we may speak of it as infinite, yet we do not mean, or at least we cannot reasonably mean, that it is not finite. To say that the bound or limit of the universe in time is immeasurably, even inconceivably, distant is one thing ; to say that we conceive the

<sup>1</sup> p. 20.

universe as without bound or limit is quite another. Doubtless it may not be easy for untrained thought to recognize a clear distinction between the two propositions; but nevertheless, in philosophy, failure to distinguish appears to be a dangerous source of error. The human mind, although it can neither conceive an absolute first point of time, nor travel continuously back to a point in time at which the universe began to be, yet can and does postulate a beginning in time for that universe which is capable of being an object of its thought. It postulates a far distant point in time, which is the limit of the duration of created things, and beyond which stretches an unknown expanse, to which it conceives no outer bound other than that which may have been determined by Him whose Consciousness is active in it.

(2) Dr. Martineau, besides making God coeval with His creation, holds that in His creative work He must have had something objective to Himself upon which to operate. Matter and space came into existence independently of Him. Thus again He appears to be represented as less than the God of Scriptural revelation. "God cannot stand for us as the sole and exhaustive term in the realm of uncreated being: as early and as long as he is, must also be somewhat objective to him. To the primordial condition we are helped by our intuitive apprehension of the infinitude of *space*, supplying a field already there for the most ancient movement of thought out of itself. Space, however, is not itself an object, but only the opportunity for objects; so that there is, perhaps, still need of another *datum*; viz., *matter* occupying finite place. It is quite possible, indeed, to refine upon this word and reduce it to 'solidified extension'; to resolve solidity into resistance; and to conceive of points of space *hardened* by becoming the depositories of a repelling force,

forbidding all else to enter ; and in this way to construe the material element back into the play of omnipotence in space. But for those who find it difficult to work out this last simplification, we may concede matter also, or extended solidity, in addition to space, as a *datum* of the problem, and as the rudimentary object for the intellectual and dynamic action of the supreme subject. Here at once is presented a field comprising an immense tissue of relations ; all that can be evolved by the sciences of measure and of number, or deduced among the primary qualities of body ; and in thinking out the universe under these conditions, the Divine Intellect moves in steps of pure deduction on an eternal ground, and justifies the saying of Plato, that God is the great Geometer.”<sup>1</sup>

This theory, it must be remarked, is philosophically unsatisfactory in that it leaves wholly unsolved the question of the origin of space, if not of matter. Further, holding it, Dr. Martineau seems scarcely justified in speaking, as he does in a later chapter, of God as the Sole Cause of the universe. “ This world,” he says, “ which is the outward theatre of history, is part of the great cosmos, all whose forces, as we have seen, find their unity in God, and whose laws are but the modes and order of his thought. In that field, he is not simply *First Cause*, but *Sole Cause* ; all force being one, and no force other than his.”<sup>2</sup>

(3) All the forces of the universe are referred by Dr. Martineau to the Will of God as their ultimate source and form. God, though not having created space and matter, is nevertheless said to be Omnipotent in His dealings with them. And yet we have to notice that, even in this sphere of Divine operation, Dr. Martineau, while not hesitating to speak of the ‘ Infinite Will,’ really puts limitation upon

Divine power. He does not, in fact, represent the Will of God as absolutely and truly supreme and free. Let us see how this is.

The human will, he says, has been exempted by God Himself from the immediate operation of His almighty power. "If within the local realm of his administration, there is an enclosure which he has chosen to veil off as sacred for a minor divineness like his own, for a free and spiritual life, having play enough from the thralldom of natural laws for responsible movements of its own; then, however resistless the sweep of his power elsewhere, here, at the threshold of this shrine of conflict and of prayer, he gently pauses in his almightiness, and lets only his love and righteousness enter in. Here is a holy place reserved for genuine moral relations and personal affections, for infinite pity and finite sacrifice, for tears of compunction and the embrace of forgiveness, and all the hidden life by which the soul ascends to God."<sup>1</sup>

That God is not present throughout the entire energy of the human will, as He is in some way present in all other force, is doubtless true. And it is not by any means on account of the Self-limitation involved in His thus withholding the hand of His controlling power from a part of His creation, that objection is raised to Dr. Martineau's position. But it is because of the attitude or relation in which God is represented as standing to the free human will to which He reveals Himself.

It is, apparently, a fundamental principle of his philosophy, that conscience and Divine revelation—other than revelation through the external world—are co-extensive. Whatever conscience, that is, the moral sense or faculty, may dictate is, in fact, a communication from God, although the recipient of the communication may not recognize His

<sup>1</sup> p. 36.

Voice. Whatever God may have to say to man, He discloses to him by means of the voice of conscience. Conscience is the mind of man apprehending moral truth revealed to him by God; and the corresponding obligation to obey, of which the will is conscious, is obligation expressing the authority of God. "Seeing that the impersonal cannot morally rule the personal, and that over living spirit nothing short of living spirit greater in elevation can wield authority, what remains but that we recognize the communion of a divine Visitant, and accept the light of conscience as no longer an unmeaning phosphorescence of our own nature, but as the revealing and appealing look of God? The wise and good of every age have variously struggled to express in adequate terms the solemnity of human obligation; but all the strivings of their thought have culminated in this: 'The word of conscience is the voice of God.'"<sup>1</sup> "We are committed to the disposal of no imperious and overmastering spontaneity of force, but of a clear consciousness of relative worth among the claims that bid for us; and this revelation of authority, this knowledge of the better, this inward conscience, this moral ideality,—call it what you will,—is the presence of God in man. Twice over, therefore, does his life meet with ours,—his *physical* agency in the forces which he lends to our organic nature; his *spiritual*, in the apprehension which he gives us of the gradations of character and the supremacy of duty."<sup>2</sup>

We have now more especially to observe, that the agent's recognition of the voice of conscience as the Voice of God appears to be, in Dr. Martineau's view, accompanied by no additional sense of moral obligation. God, in His revealed or recognized Personality, seems to be regarded as appealing and entreating, not commanding.

<sup>1</sup> p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> p. 105.

The conception of *duty*, whencesoever it arises, remains unchanged; or, if change there is, it appears to be only in the direction of relaxation. "This selective law speaks direct to a selective power in us: exalting *this* above *that*, it requires that we should do so too. It is the appeal of will to will: 'This is my choice: be it yours also.' And so it is nothing less than the bending of the divine holiness to train the human; the overflowing sanctity of the Supreme Mind, shed forth to elicit by free sympathy the secret possibilities of ours."<sup>1</sup> "When conscience was found to be inseparably blended with the Holy Spirit . . . the cold obedience to a mysterious necessity was exchanged for the *allegiance of personal affection*."<sup>2</sup>

There is here, it will be perceived, no hint of any direct imposition by God of His Will upon the will of man. There is no suggestion of any discipline of subjecting man's will to His. And yet this imposition, this discipline, appears to be, in fact, an essential part of God's revelation of Himself to the inner consciousness. Dr. Martineau, it must be maintained, is certainly mistaken in confounding moral obligation to practise virtue, religious obligation to reverence and please God, and religious obligation to yield Him unquestioning obedience. He is certainly in error in fusing into one idea, under the name conscience, the mind's apprehension of the voice of nature, its apprehension of the appeals of God, and its apprehension of His stern commands. Nature, or God speaking through nature, bids us do that which we perceive to be natural or virtuous; God, speaking in His own Person, but indirectly through former revelations, invites us to practise conduct of the kind of which we know that He approves; God, speaking directly, requires us to do whatever He declares to be His Will. Doubtless the conduct which from time

<sup>1</sup> p. 71.<sup>2</sup> p. 75.

to time He in His own Person actually enjoins is not, and cannot be, very different from that which commends itself to reason as natural or virtuous; but the obligation to obedience is, it must be contended, in the one case, and not in the other, peremptory and unconditional.

Dr. Martineau, then, appears to regard God as claiming, and as entitled to, man's conscious allegiance only as a God who now expresses His Personal approval and advocacy of that conduct which through nature He has commended. He apparently supposes God to confine Himself exclusively to willing in accordance with established laws. But in this view God's freedom and supremacy seem to suffer undue curtailment. He is not represented to us as in any degree absolutely free at the present time to order His creatures solely according to His sovereign and loving Will. And yet a great part of the higher moral life—as many a struggling Christian knows full well—consists in the will being gradually brought by Divine discipline into conscious and glad subjection to the Will of God.

IV. Let us now consider Dr. Martineau's account of the more purely human side of conscience. "We are sent into the world, charged with a number of instincts, each, when alone, darkly urging us towards its own object; but all, when thrown into various competitions together, lighted up with intuitive knowledge of their own relative worth and rights; so that we are never left in doubt which of two simultaneous impulses has the nobler claim upon us. This natural estimate is what we mean by *conscience*. It has nothing to do with the values of external actions, but only with the comparative authority of their inward springs; it gives no foresight of effects, but only insight into obligation at its source. But this it does with revelation so clear, so solemn, so consentaneous for all men, that



those who will not own it to be divine can never find a voice of which it is the echo in our humanity.”<sup>1</sup> “The consciousness we have of the relative excellence of the several instincts and affections which compete for our will—a consciousness inseparable from the experience of each as it comes into comparison with another, but incomplete till we have rung the changes on them all—is neither more nor less than *conscience*. The moral faculty, therefore, is not any apprehension of invisible qualities in external actions, not any partition of them into the absolutely good and absolutely evil, not any intellectual testing of them by rules of congruity, or balances of utility, but a recognition, at their very source, of a scale of *relative* values lying within ourselves, and introducing a *preferential* character throughout the countless combinations of our possible activity.”<sup>2</sup>

Morality, then, consists in indulging one motive or combination of motives, rather than another, according to the relative places of the competitors in a Divinely revealed scale of objective moral worth. Further, revealed truth is nothing but a representation of this scale, or of parts of it, in the consciousness of man. “The field, on the one hand, which is entered through the intuitions of conscience, is the field *of freedom, of possibility, of alternatives*, i.e. of *spiritual action*, amenable, not to natural antecedents, but to preferential obligation, carrying in it the relation of mind obeying and mind commanding, both on the ground of a common righteousness. Here we are ushered by our own supernatural life (i.e. life beyond the range of Nature-necessity) into cognizance of our supernatural affinities: we walk in the presence, not simply of animals in the same cage, but of spirits other than our own; with whom we pass from creatures of nature into children

<sup>1</sup> p. 76.<sup>2</sup> p. 46.

of God. This is the speciality which properly reserves for the *moral* intuitions alone among the cases of immediate knowledge an identification with revealed Religion.”<sup>1</sup>

The hypothesis of an objective moral scale, determining, without reference to their intensity, an order of precedence among competing motives, must be pronounced untenable. Doubtless it contains a measure of truth; but as a full presentation of the reasonable ground of moral action it can by no means be accepted. With its adequacy, however, as a theory of moral science we need not here concern ourselves; what we have to consider is its sufficiency as a description of the content of Divine revelation.

We are told that with knowledge of God as the Author of the moral law there springs up also an apprehension of His love and a feeling of devout affection for Him. “When conscience was found to be inseparably blended with the Holy Spirit . . . the cold obedience to a mysterious necessity was exchanged for the *allegiance of personal affection*. . . . The veil falls from the shadowed face of moral authority, and the directing love of the all-holy God shines forth.”

Upon this the serious question arises—How can apprehension of God’s love possibly be accounted for? If the field of revelation is identical with that of moral intuition, and if moral intuition is nothing but the recognition of relative worth of motives in an objective moral scale, how can man, having learned—apparently by reflection—that the Author of the familiar moral law is a Personal Will, attain to the further knowledge that the expression of that Will is love? Surely the love of God, regarded as His most essential characteristic, is an attribute which man could never have discovered for himself. Neither physical nature nor the moral law, though in them, when

<sup>1</sup> p. 307.

we are once instructed, we may find abundant confirmation of God's love, is decisive evidence that its Author is a Being worthy of reverent affection. Surely we are indebted, for knowledge of His love, to a revelation other than that of the external world, and other than that which distinguishes inwardly between relative good and evil. A revelation of Himself in an objective scale of motives cannot be, as Dr. Martineau contends, the only moral revelation which He has vouchsafed to man.

V. Let us further test the correctness of Dr. Martineau's theory of revelation by its capability of explaining two notable phenomena in the field of history. The one phenomenon—the lofty and unique human personality of Jesus Christ—is acknowledged by him as a sufficiently attested fact. The other—the practice, in its perfection, by other men of Christlike conduct—is apparently accepted by him as a fact that is to be. “It is the singleness,” he writes, “of this *life in God* that gave its uniqueness to the personality of Jesus ; referring back all his experiences to the infinitely Perfect, all his sorrows to the eternal blessedness, all his disappointments to the living Fountain of hope.”<sup>1</sup> “If Jesus of Nazareth,” we find him saying in another place, “in virtue of the characteristics of his spirit, holds the place of Prince of Saints, and perfects the conditions of the pure religious life, he thereby reveals the highest possibilities of the human soul, and their dependence on habitual communion between man and God.”<sup>2</sup>

If his view of the limited scope of Divine revelation is correct, how can the unique elevation of the human character of Jesus be reasonably accounted for? If God reveals Himself only by means of the natural voice of conscience ; if Jesus Christ, instead of being Himself a Revelation of the Father, was merely a man to whom God

<sup>1</sup> p. 611.

<sup>2</sup> p. 652.

was pleased to reveal Himself in an extraordinary degree, but in the usual way—his mental vision embracing the loftiest eminence of the moral scale; we seem to have here no sufficient explanation of his holiness of life. For, in the first place, whence originated the perpetual activity of lofty impulses? And, in the second place, whence arose the uniform obedience of submissive will? Is it credible that the son of Joseph and Mary, even if we suppose him capable of receiving so full a degree of moral illumination, would have found his moral constitution equal to the task of living according to his knowledge of what was ideally the best?

But, leaving this question, let us pass on to that which we can discuss more freely. How can a revelation of relative good and evil gradually lead man upwards to the attainment of perfection?

“Whoever,” says Dr. Martineau, “is faithful to a first grace that opens on him shall have a second in advance of it; and, if still he follows the messenger of God, angels ever brighter shall go before his way. Every duty done leaves the eye more clear, and enables gentler whispers to reach the ear; every brave sacrifice incurred lightens the weight of the clinging self which holds us back; every storm of passion swept away leaves the air of the mind transparent for more distant visions: and thus, by a happy concord of spiritual attractions, the helping graces of Heaven descend, and meet the soul intent to rise. Though, therefore, it is not ours to elevate ourselves, we shall assuredly be sent for, if we will only go.”<sup>1</sup> “God’s part is done, when, having made us free, he shows to us our best: ours now remains to pass on from illumination of the conscience to surrender of the will.”<sup>2</sup>

He seems to be here depicting, as always possible to

<sup>1</sup> p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> p. 106.

man, steady moral progress towards perfection. He appears to be cognizant of no mastering of the will by unruly motives, no dominant tendency in the will itself to side with motives urging to conduct disapproved by conscience. However low or however high may be a man's position in a scale of character, however great or however small may be the distance at which he stands below the summit, it is open to him to begin, or to proceed with, a continuous ascent. However far he may have deviated from the path to holiness, it is always possible for him to retrace his steps, and henceforth move steadfastly towards his goal. Whatever may be the competing impulses between which the will is at any given moment called on to decide, it has power to resolve to take part with that which is commended by conscience, and it has power to determine action in accordance with this resolve.

Against this view it must be strongly objected, that it altogether fails to give adequate recognition to the results of disobedience. It must be maintained that, as a full and typical description of the conditions of moral progress, it is very far indeed from being in accordance with the facts of life. Sin, or voluntary disobedience, is acknowledged freely enough by Dr. Martineau ; but he has no sufficient perception of the sinfulness, inherited and acquired, which is a consequence of sin. He admits, indeed, no small degree of moral deterioration ; but none of it is necessarily permanent. "With disuse and rejection," he says, "the higher springs retire and vanish out of sight, not only abandoning us to our poor performance ; but lowering the range of our very *problems*, and leaving us with a sinking standard for our thought as well as an enfeebled vigour in our will."<sup>1</sup> But then he also says—speaking, as it seems, with sympathy and approval—"The hymns and

<sup>1</sup> p. 55.

litanies of Christendom are the perpetual sigh of the human spirit for the Divine, now sinking into a *Miserere* for their separation, and then swelling into a *Jubilate* at their reunion. Nay, even upon its philosophy and polity the same unresting and prospective temper has left its mark. The dream and tendency of modern society has been, not to conform to the world as it is, but to make it what it ought to be ; not to stereotype some best condition which should adequately repress the incurable evil and set free the given store of good, but to repent of every wrong in the past and press on to every right in the future ; to open boundless possibilities, and own with shame how few of them have yet been realized ; to treat humanity as no perpetual self-repetition, but as a spiritual organism of unlimited growth, with illis deciduous as each season falls, but roots that can feed on the very decay they make, and branches that answer with a fuller foliage to every vernal wind. So much for living in presence of the Infinite God, instead of finite Nature : the mingled sense of possible righteousness and actual guiltiness has at once humbled and inspired the human soul, and impressed a *movement* upon Christendom out of the dead past into the living future, which had never been owned by men before.”<sup>1</sup>

The deteriorating effects of sin, we seem to be told, can be obliterated by repentance and human effort. And substantially the same teaching is contained in the following passage relating to forgiveness.

“When we ask, throughout Christendom, what it is that its Author has characteristically done for men, the first element in the answer is this : he has awakened in them a sense of Sin entirely unlike the servile fear and mere deprecation of retributory anger which had set up the

<sup>1</sup> p. 458.

priest and the altar of earlier religions. *They* brought their expiatory sacrifices at crises of terror or special crime, when the heavens scowled upon them and could hardly hold their thunders in : *He* breathed into the soul a permanent sorrow of humility, kindling on its upper side with a glory of aspiration. Their impulse was to fly from the track of the pursuing gods, and hide 'in caves and dens of the earth' from the capturing enemies : He put it into the offender's heart to say, 'I will arise and go to my Father,' and to expect the embrace of restoring love. Their whole device was to buy off and escape the pains and penalties of their wrong-doing, and be no worse for it : He brought his penitents to just the opposite mind : so that nothing is further from their desire than to throw their burden off : it is the fitting sequel to their sin, and it would leave a stain upon them not to bear it to the last : nor is the suffering unsanctified for the spirit now reconciled to God. It is this genuine moral assent to the requirements of the Divine Holiness,—this inward acceptance of all that it appoints, and loves, and is, which lifts the Christian sense of Sin into quite another region of character from that in which self-interested hope and terror assail the will." <sup>1</sup>

Doubtless, by man's repentance and God's free acceptance of the submission of his will, certain effects of sin are done away : debt is cancelled, and separation is no more. And by man's patient endurance of the consequential suffering of sin God's disciplinary ordinance is righteously observed. But what are we to say of the disorder introduced into man's moral constitution by voluntary perversion of its operative forces? Where are we to look for any provision for its complete repair? Even if, with Dr. Martineau, we regard it as consisting

<sup>1</sup> p. 455.

only in "a sinking standard for our thought as well as an enfeebled vigour in our will," how is the will to become once more strong, and in a position to execute higher duties? What reason have we to suppose that a will is originally endowed with superfluous strength, so that when, through the "sinking standard for our thought," produced by disobedience, it is once more called upon to face the old difficulties of an earlier and lower stage of moral life, it still has power to choose the better in preference to the worse? Even if obedience should be always possible to a will that has not fallen, it by no means follows that it is always hereafter possible, when once the will has chosen to disobey. What assurance, then, have we of recovery from the deteriorating effects of sin?

Certainly the truth appears to be, that there exists in the human nature of the first creation no recuperative power sufficient to obliterate the disorder caused by sin. And we have, perhaps, no ground whatever for expecting that such power should exist. In the bodily organism—whether or not there may be complete recovery from minor sicknesses and hurts—there are injuries and disorders, such as the laceration of a limb and the impoverishment of a faculty, which are beyond retrieval. And is it not reasonable to suppose, that the grave moral disturbance caused by sin similarly admits of no complete natural repair? Dr. Martineau, in a passage that has been quoted, seems to liken sins repented of to the deciduous leaves of an autumnal forest. This may be to some extent a true comparison in respect of our cognizance of them as overt acts in the history of our lives. But in respect of their hidden and immediate operation upon character, the analogy is rather that of the cutting of bark and the maiming of branches, in such wise



that a tree is for ever shorn of some portion of its leafy glory.

In what, then, rests our hope of ultimate perfection? Reason seems to say that it can rest only in God's dogmatic revelation of His saving grace.

## CHAPTER X.

### PRINCIPAL CAIRD.

I. As the work of a distinguished representative of the Hegelian school of philosophy, Principal Caird's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* seems to demand in a special manner some notice in this volume. A philosophical treatise on religious faith which should avoid all examination of Hegelian principles might fairly be deemed, in the present condition of British thought, unsatisfactorily incomplete. For, in the first place, Hegelianism is much in vogue among cultivated minds. It has for them an attraction, both on account of new philosophical truth which it enounces, and on account of the elevation of the moral and religious sentiments which it puts forward as its own. It professes to be, and makes some appearance of being, rationalized Christianity, essential Christianity established upon a firm basis of sound reason. In the second place, there is in it so much that is obscure—conceptions in themselves difficult to grasp, terms employed without due precision and explanation, statements wanting clear evidence in their support—that for a student to obtain such hold of it, as to be in a position to judge it critically, is no easy task. Standing on an eminence hard to climb, shrouded to no small extent in defensive mist, and known to be guarded by men of unquestioned power, it seems to be in great measure secure from serious attack; even

though it may be the case, that in the interest of religious truth the weakness of some of its positions requires to be exposed.

On two grounds, then, it is desirable to make examination of some Hegelian treatise. It is desirable, lest critics should depreciate this volume as the work of an author having no apparent acquaintance with a kind of speculation regarded by many as the highest existing, if not the final, stage or development of religious thought. And it is desirable, because it appears to be a task, needful to be performed, to the performance of which too few writers feel that they are called.

In Principal Caird's book much ability is displayed, and also much high religious feeling. His speculative presentation, however, of religion certainly does not accord—though he scarcely seems to recognize this fact—with the theology of the Bible ; and it will be our business to examine with care the process of the argument by which he reaches his conclusions. His main position is, or appears to be, substantially as follows:—Cultivated reason evolves and systematizes that final conception of religion which is the justification of Christianity.

He does not, indeed, deny, or even ignore, the fact of Divine revelation. "There can," he says, "be no elevation of the finite spirit into communion with the infinite which does not imply divine acts or a divine process of self-revelation. Neither thought nor the aspirations of the religious nature can be satisfied with the rationalistic notion of a merely subjective religion—of opinions and beliefs wrought out by the purely spontaneous activity of the human mind, and implying nothing more on the divine side than is involved in the original creation of man's rational nature. A God who does not reveal Himself ceases to be God ; and religious feeling, craving after

a living relation to its object, refuses to be satisfied with a mere initial or potential revelation of the mind and will of God—with a God who speaks once for all, and then through the whole course of history ceases to reveal Himself.”<sup>1</sup>

And, speaking of Christianity, he writes thus: “The idea of organic development is in no way inconsistent with the claim of Christianity to be regarded as a religion of supernatural or divine origin. . . . In whatever way we conceive of the revelation to the human consciousness of the new and original element in Christianity, the principle of development, so far from excluding such an element, would have no meaning without it. It is absolutely antagonistic to any such notion as that Christian doctrine is a mere compound of Greek, Oriental, and Jewish ingredients. However externally originated or conditioned, the appearance of Christianity in the world implies a new spiritual movement, an advance or elevation of the human spirit, which, though it does not obliterate, transcends all the results of its past history. To apply the idea of development to human history is by no means to find in the old the mechanical or efficient cause of the new. For in organic development the new, though presupposing the old, involves the introduction of a wholly original element, not given in the old. Hence we are not to conceive that Christianity could be elaborated out of pre-Christian religions and philosophies, any more than that life could be elaborated out of inorganic matter. To apply this principle to religion is to assert a relation between Christianity and the earlier stages of man’s spiritual history; indeed, unless we suppose the human race to have been annihilated and a new race, out of all connection or continuity with the former, to have been

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, ed. 1889, p. 60.

created as the receptacle of the new religion—without some such monstrous supposition, we must think of Christianity as essentially related to the antecedent course of man's spiritual life, and related to it in the way which rational spiritual life, by its very nature, involves. But the connection of Christianity with the past, which we here assert, is a connection which at the same time involves the annulling and transmitting of the past by a new creative spiritual force.”<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless his view of revelation is not that which has been taken in this book. The revelation for which he contends is not supernatural, in the sense of being other than natural; it is not supernatural, in the sense of being the communication of truth which human reason could not, without the special intervention of God from time to time, possibly have discovered, and which, when communicated, it cannot possibly do more than partially understand. Rather, it is the awakening of the human reason to the perception of such new truth as is the natural supply of its growing needs, of new truth which contains no element beyond man's power to comprehend. Principal Caird claims for reason that it is its natural prerogative to explore—being all the while Divinely led—the entire region of truth. “It is of the very essence of man as a spiritual, self-conscious being to transcend the finite, to rise above the world of inner and outer experience. . . . Man's spiritual nature is the form of an infinite content, and morality and religion are the practical, as philosophy is the speculative, effort to realize it.”<sup>2</sup>

But we have to note further, that the Divinely enlightened reason which finds out truth is not the intuitive apprehension of individuals; even agreement among individuals is no criterion, or no sufficient criterion, of

<sup>1</sup> p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> p. 307.

objective truth. The reason which finds its expression in philosophy it is on which alone dependence can be placed. "It cannot be assumed without further reason that my moral and spiritual intuitions are, even for me, a revelation of infallible truth. . . . That to which we appeal as the ultimate arbiter in religious truth is not subjective notions and impressions, which are variable as the influences of temperament, tradition, association, to which the minds of men are subjected ; but it is the objective authority of reason itself, which, in its universality, its absoluteness, its self-consistency, alone has the right to dominate all individual thought and the power to give irrefragable assurance of its own deliverances."<sup>1</sup>

And the nature of the proof which philosophy affords is thus explained :—"The highest explanation and justification is given to any idea or element of thought when it is shown to be a necessary moment of the universal system, a member of that organic unity of thought, no part of which is or can be isolated or independent, or related to any other accidentally or arbitrarily, but wherein each idea has a place or function involved in its own nature and in its necessary relations to all other ideas and to the whole. Nor does this mean that the proof of any idea or belief is its place in a process of syllogistic deduction. We may admit that there are notions, ideas, beliefs, which cannot be deduced syllogistically, which the logic of the understanding cannot justify, and yet maintain that by a profounder logic, which enters into the genesis and traces the secret rhythm and evolution of thought, they can be shown to rise out of, and be affiliated to, other ideas, and to form constituent elements in that living process of which all truth consists. And as the life of any member of a living organism may be said to be proved

<sup>1</sup> p. 55.

by this, that it is an essential part of the system, that it is at once means and end, implying and implied in all the rest; so, of any moral and spiritual idea it is the only and all-sufficient justification—that which lends to it the highest necessity—that it can be shown to be a necessary moment of that organic whole, that eternal order and system, of which universal truth consists, and which is only another name for Him who is at once the beginning and the end, the source and consummation of all thought and being.”<sup>1</sup>

The system, then, which Principal Caird unfolds is a system which has no dependence upon mere authority. It is a theological system, an exhibition of the true relation between the finite and the Infinite, which is professedly a pure product of speculative thought—of illuminated thought, indeed, but still of thought. As such it is of course amenable throughout to searching investigation in the name of reason; and we shall presently see how far it is able to sustain the tests to which it is subjected in the course of being critically examined.

II. Let the reader now observe that in the passages that have been quoted mention is made of the organic development of truth in the human consciousness; and universal or absolute truth is represented as constituting an organic whole. Now it is in this conception of an organic life of thought that we have the key to Principal Caird's system of theology, and, as he supposes, the only key to a true philosophy of religion. Organic life is regarded by him as a category to which all thought belongs, as a category under which thought must be placed in order to be properly understood, and as the final category under which it can be exhibited. The category of the organic life of thought, a life which consists in a

<sup>1</sup> p. 58.

unity or harmony of differences, is the highest discovery of speculative reason. And, apparently, when he admits that the introduction of Christianity into the world was due to "a new creative spiritual force," it is the advancement of human reason to the apprehension of the organic life of thought that he has in mind. This apprehension is what is due to the creative force, and this apprehension is the discovery of Christianity. The thought of the world is an organic whole which, by the operation of creative force, reaches its last stage of development at the Christian era. The thought of the individual mind, too, is itself an organic whole. It is also a part of a universal organic whole, standing, as such, in certain natural relations to the thought of other minds. And the last stage in the development of world-thought is apprehension of the organic nature of universal and individual thought or consciousness or spirit. It takes cognizance of the relations, constituting Christianity, that exist between spirit and spirit in consequence of thought or consciousness or spirit being intrinsically an organic whole.

Whatever truth and value there may be in this conception of a category of organic life of thought, it does not appear to be capable of sustaining the fabric of an incontrovertible philosophy of religion. Before, however, we quarrel with the use that is made of it, let it be further explained in Principal Caird's own words.

"If it is possible to advance from faith to science, in other words, to attain, in the sphere of religion, to knowledge in the philosophic sense of the word, there must be an organon of thought by means of which we can perceive and correct the inadequacy of ordinary thinking, and apprehend spiritual realities in their purely ideal form."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 178.



“In a mind, which feels and thinks and wills, we are forced to think, not only a multiplicity of differences which, as in organism, though constituting a self-centred unity, have still nevertheless an external, spatial existence, an outwardness which neither life nor feeling can dissolve; but we have also the absolutely new and higher result of a multiplicity of differences which are wholly retracted out of a spatial outwardness. Here the faintest residuum of self-externality disappears and is dissolved into the perfect unity of self-consciousness.”<sup>1</sup>

“In mind or spirit, in the feelings, ideas, experiences of self-conscious beings, in their relations to each other and to the Infinite Mind, there emerges a new kind of unity—a *unity of differences*, in which all trace of that self-externality which pertains to nature and the world of sense has disappeared. In the realm of mind, in the spiritual life of conscious beings, there is infinite multiplicity and diversity; but it is a multiplicity or diversity which is no longer that of parts divided from each other, each of which exists and can be conceived of by itself in isolation or segregation from the rest, or in purely external relations to them. Here, on the contrary, the multiplicity and diversity is that of parts or elements, each of which exists *in and through* the rest, has its individual being and significance only in its vital organic relation to the rest, or each of which can be known only when it is seen, in a sense, to *be* the rest. You cannot, for example, take the combination of two externally independent things in space and employ it as a representation of the relation of mind and its object, or of love and the being who is loved, or of the union of one soul with another, or of all finite spirits with God. For, though thought be distinguishable from its object, it is not divisible from it; the thinker and

<sup>1</sup> p. 106.

the object thought of are nothing apart from each other, they are twain yet one ; the object is only object for the subject, the subject for the object ; they have no meaning or existence taken individually, and in their union they are not two separate things stuck together, but two that have absolutely lost or dissolved their duality in a higher unity. The same thing is true of spiritual feeling and its object. You cannot represent or figure to yourself the union of souls by the combination of things that have an existence outside of each other ; for a being into whose nature the element of love, sympathy, self-surrender, enters as an essential characteristic, is not intelligible as an isolated thing, or without taking into our notion of it the other beings to whom it is related.”<sup>1</sup>

“To be rational, our knowledge must be coherent and systematic ; our ideas, *e.g.*, of matter and mind, of things natural and things spiritual, of the world without and the world within, our ideas of Nature and Man and God, of the Finite and Infinite, must, in order to be held together in thought, be, not merely not discordant and contradictory, but so related to each other by necessary links of thought as to constitute one self-consistent body or system of truth.

“Now so long as we look at things from the point of view of the logical understanding and under those laws of Identity and Contradiction which it adopts as its fundamental principles, it is impossible to attain to any such coherence and unity in our apprehension of the various objects of knowledge. All real knowledge is systematic knowledge, but the abstract logical method makes system impossible. Matter and Mind, Nature and Man and God are thus isolated from each other, each in its own hard self-identical individuality, and must be regarded as in-

<sup>1</sup> p. 188.

dependent entities existing side by side, or only outwardly and mechanically related to each other; and their co-existence in one universe, though it may be held as a fact, is not a co-existence for thought. The understanding, indeed, attempts to pass beyond individual existences and to give unity to its apprehension of the different objects of knowledge; but, as it cannot break through the hard self-inclusion in which at the outset it has shut up each individual object, the only expedient to which it can have recourse is that of abstraction and generalization. . . . Generalization, so far from apprehending reality, is a process which takes us away from it, and the further it advances, the more abstract our thought becomes, the further do we recede from the real, objective truth of things.

“But thought is capable of another and deeper movement. It can rise to a universality which is not foreign to, but the very inward nature of things in themselves, not the universal of an abstraction from the particular and different, but the unity which is immanent in them and finds in them its own necessary expression; not an arbitrary invention of the observing and classifying mind unifying in its own imagination things which are yet essentially different, but an idea which expresses the inner dialectic, the movement or process towards unity, which exists in and constitutes the being of the objects themselves. This deeper and truer universality is that which may be designated *ideal or organic universality*. The idea of a living organism, as we formerly saw, is not a common element which can be got at by abstraction and generalization—by taking the various parts and members, stripping away the differences, and forming a notion of that which they have in common. That in which they differ is rather just that out of which their unity arises, and in which is the very life

and being of the organism ; that which they have in common, not as members of a living organism, but as dead matter, and what you have to abstract in order to get it, is the very life itself. . . . Here then we have a kind of universality which is altogether different from the barren and formal universality of generalization, and the indication of a movement of thought corresponding to an inner relation of things which the abstracting, generalizing understanding is altogether inadequate to grasp.

“ Now, it is by the application of this principle to religion and religious ideas that we are enabled to apprehend these ideas in their essential nature, their reciprocal relations, and their harmony and unity as a whole. The attraction of Pantheism and of pantheistic systems of philosophy lies in this, that they meet the craving of the religious mind for absolute union with God and of the speculative mind for intellectual unity. But what Pantheism gains by the sacrifice of individuality and responsibility in man, by depriving the finite world of reality and reducing Nature, Man, and God, to a blank, colourless identity, a true philosophy attains in another and deeper way. It gives us a principle in the light of which we can see that God is all in all, without denying reality to the finite world and to every individual human spirit, or without denying it except in so far as it involves a life apart from God—a spurious independence which is not the protection, but the destruction of all spiritual life.”<sup>1</sup>

III. Closely connected with the conception of a category of organic life of thought is the proof offered by Principal Caird of God's existence. The ordinary cosmological and teleological arguments—the arguments, that is, from the contingency of the world, and from design in nature—do not satisfy him, because they fall far short of exhibiting

<sup>1</sup> p. 221.

God as related to the universe organically. In a special form, however, of the ontological argument, or the argument from thought to being, he finds the required evidence.

"The Ontological Argument," he says, "as commonly stated, finds in the very idea of God the proof of His existence. The thought of God in the mind demonstrates His Being. This conclusion from Thought to Being constitutes the gist of the argument, though it is presented in different forms by different writers. . . . We shall find that, imperfect as may be the form in which it has often been presented, the principle of this argument is that on which our whole religious consciousness may be said to rest." <sup>1</sup>

The following passages give the substance of his presentation of the argument.

"All knowledge, even the most elementary, rests on the tacit assumption of an absolute criterion of knowledge—the assumption that we have as the basis of our consciousness a final standard of truth, an ideal of what is knowable, an ultimate ground of certitude which is the measure of all individual opinion, and which itself cannot be questioned without self-contradiction. I do not ultimately measure my knowledge, or become aware of its limited and imperfect character, by comparison with any other man's knowledge, for that also may be erroneous and imperfect, and to no finite or fallible authority can I render that submission which is due to absolute truth. But the secret or implicit conviction on which all knowledge rests, and to which all individual opinions and beliefs are referred, is that absolute truth *is*, or in other words, that though my thought may err, there is an absolute thought or intelligence which it is impossible to doubt. . . .

<sup>1</sup> p. 146.

"The same thing may be otherwise expressed by saying that all human knowledge, when we examine closely into its nature, will be seen to rest on or involve the pre-supposition of the unity of knowing and being, or of a unity which embraces all thought and existence. The ultimate basis of consciousness is not the consciousness of self, for the individual's consciousness of self would have no meaning if it did not rest on a more universal consciousness which lies beneath it. . . . When we think, we rise above our individual existence as limited by the outward world, to an existence which is not so limited, which comprehends both all individual selves and the world. We do not think, that is, as individual beings, but as passing over to and sharing in a universal thought or reason. Were we shut up in our own individuality, our life would be that only of the animal, or that to which the animals are supposed to be confined—a thing of isolated sensations, without any consciousness either of a permanent self or object, or of a universality beyond and comprehending both. But it is our prerogative as spiritual beings, that we can rise above the feeling of the moment, above all that is isolated and individual. We can make our own individual selves objects of thought quite as much as other individual selves. We can enter into a sphere of thought which has no relation to our individual selves. We can think of a time when we did not exist, we can think away our own and other individual existence, but we cannot think away thought or conceive of *its* non-existence. If we try to annul all existence, to think that nothing exists, the nothing is still a thinkable nothing, a nothing that is for thought, or that implies a thought or consciousness behind it. Thus, all our conscious life as individuals, rests on or implies a consciousness that is universal. We cannot think, save on the pre-supposition of a thought or consciousness

which is the unity of thought and being, or on which all individual thought and existence rest.”<sup>1</sup>

“When we are compelled to think of all existences as relative to thought, and of thought as prior to all, amongst the existences to which it is prior is our own individual self. We can make our own individual self, just as much as other things, the object of thought. We can not only think, but we can think the individual thinker. We might even say that, strictly speaking, it is not we that think, but the universal reason that thinks in us. In other words, in thinking, we rise to a universal point of view, from which our own individuality is of no more account than the individuality of any other object. Hence, as thinking beings we dwell already in a region in which our individual feelings and opinions, as such, have no absolute worth, but that which alone has absolute worth is a thought which does not pertain to us individually, but is the universal life of all intelligences, or the life of universal, Absolute Intelligence.

“What, then, we have reached as the true meaning of the ontological proof is this, that as spiritual beings our whole conscious life is based on a universal self-consciousness, an Absolute Spiritual Life, which is not a mere subjective notion or conception, but which carries with it the proof of its necessary existence or reality.”<sup>2</sup>

And now, admitting the correctness of his reasoning, let us see what the result is that we have before us. The common argument from the contingency of the world, properly understood, leads us, as the reader may be supposed to know, to a Being, existing on the confines of nature but not necessarily within them, in whom phenomenal causation has its origin. The common argument from design in nature leads us to a Being, of undetermined

<sup>1</sup> p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> p. 150.

habitation, to whom the order and beauty of the universe are due. The ontological argument of Principal Caird leads us to a Being, who is so related to all things as to know them as they are. It is an argument from the reality of things to the existence of a Being in whose thought or knowledge of them reality consists.

There appears to be nothing in this argument, regarded as a proof of God's existence, to distinguish it essentially from the other two. It only exhibits in another aspect the existence of the Power that manifests itself in nature. The Power that has designed and willed things as we see them may be taken to be a Power that knows them as they are. Knowledge, on the part of any Power, of all things as they are implies no greater degree of absence of finitude, and no greater degree of immanence in or organic relation to the universe, than do the origination of phenomenal causation and the impression upon phenomena of marks of a single designing mind. We have in this ontological argument no approach to a proof of the existence of the Supreme God who is the Object of Christian worship.

IV. But let us see how Principal Caird proceeds to handle this proof of the existence of an Absolute Intelligence. The point on which he is set is to exhibit man, as finite, and God, as Infinite, in necessary and organic relation the one with the other; this special organic relation being that in which alone the consciousness can rest. And he finds in the ontological argument a proof of the existence of a God who is Infinite—Infinite, moreover, in such a sense as to satisfy the needs of religious aspiration.

He pictures world-thought, conscious of finitude and thus virtually possessing knowledge of the Infinite, attaining in three successive stages to an adequate conception of the Infinite Being. The cosmological, the teleological, and



the ontological proof represent the three stages. The cosmological proof gives God only as non-finite; the teleological proof gives Him as an imperfect Infinite; the ontological proof gives Him as an Infinite who is "Infinite Mind, or that universal infinite Self-consciousness on which the conscious life of all finite minds is based, and whose very nature it is to reveal Himself in and to them."<sup>1</sup>

Now in this argument, designed to show the true infinitude of Absolute Intelligence, we may notice three distinct instances of fallacious reasoning.

The first fallacy is the assumption that the human mind, naturally conscious of finitude, is in a state of aspiration after an infinite. This, relatively to the question of the source of man's knowledge of God's existence, is a clear *petitio principii*. It has been maintained in this book, and must still be maintained, that it is only God's special revelation of Himself that first awakens in human consciousness the conception of an existence that is not finite. And finitude, it must be insisted, in so far as it is a term used to signify inferiority or imperfection, denotes an idea which is the child, not the parent, of the idea of infinitude. Principal Caird, however, bases man's search after, and ultimate finding of, the Infinite on a supposed inevitable apprehension that all mundane things are unsatisfyingly finite. "All religion," he says, "starts from a sense of the insufficiency, vanity, unreality of the finite; and this would be an impossible experience, if in the very feeling of our finitude there were not contained a latent consciousness of that which denies and contradicts it."<sup>2</sup> And quoting from the Bible the sentences—"The world passeth away and the lust thereof": "The things that are seen are temporal": "Our life is but a vapour that appeareth for a little and then vanisheth away"—he remarks upon

<sup>1</sup> p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> p. 196.

them thus: "Such words as these express a feeling old as the history of man, which the fleeting, shifting character of the scene on which we look, the transiency of life, the inadequacy of its satisfactions, the insecurity of its possessions, the lack of any fixed stay, of anything enduring and real on which our thoughts and desires can rest—which, in briefer terms, the contingency and unsubstantiality of the world and the things of the world inevitably awaken in the mind, and which impels us to seek after a reality beyond the world of shadows, an enduring and eternal rock on which, amidst the stream that bears us away, we may plant our feet."<sup>1</sup>

Let the reader note two points. First, however old may be a feeling of the transitoriness of mundane things, the sentences quoted by Principal Caird to illustrate the existence of this feeling are the utterances of close followers of Jesus Christ, men who certainly believed most firmly in God's special revelations of things eternal. Secondly, if in any heathen writer we meet with reflections somewhat similar in form, there is no need to place a similar interpretation on them. If, for example, we read that "life is short," there is no need to see in the expression anything more than a comparison, in respect of duration, of one mundane thing with others. The other things, indeed, with which life is compared may be, like geological and ethnological periods, things of which the bounds are out of sight. But the mere difference of degree between visible and invisible limitation by no means corresponds to the difference in kind which we conceive of as existing between the finite and the infinite. Thus Principal Caird produces no evidence that a sense of contrast between finitude and infinitude is part of the natural equipment of human reason.

<sup>1</sup> p. 128.

The second fallacy is that of confusedly identifying the common argument from the contingency of the world—the argument leading from phenomenal causation to a Power in which causation has its origin—with an argument from the finitude of things to a Being that is not finite. Speaking of the cosmological argument he says—"The movement of thought which this argument involves may be stated in various forms or under different categories. It may be put as an argument from the world viewed as phenomenal, to an absolute substance out of which all phenomena spring; or from the world viewed as an effect to a First Cause; or more generally from the world viewed as finite and relative to an infinite and absolute Being on whom it rests. But in all these and other forms, the gist of the argument is the same. If we take it, for example, in the form in which it turns on the idea of causality, it is the argument, that whatever does not exist necessarily exists only through another being as its cause, and that again, if itself not necessary, through another: and as an infinite regress of finite or contingent beings related as causes and effects is unthinkable, the mind is compelled to stop short and place at the head of the series a First Cause, a Being which is its own cause, or which exists unconditionally and necessarily.

"Translated out of this abstract form, this argument is simply the expression of the fact that the first dawn of religious feeling may be traced to the impression which our experience of life forces upon us of the transitory, unsubstantial, evanescent character of the world on which we look and of which we form a part."<sup>1</sup>

The cosmological argument, admittedly a natural product of the human reason, does nothing, by its existence, to support the contention that the mind is naturally

<sup>1</sup> p. 127.

directed to apprehension of an infinite. It is only by a fallacy of confusion, very evident in the passage just quoted, that it is made to appear to do so.

The third fallacy is that of finding in the Being, whose existence the ontological argument makes known, the infinitude which is supposed to have existence somewhere. If we assume that we have some apprehension of a Being that is in some sense Infinite, and if we allow that the existence of an Intelligence knowing all things as they are is a postulate of thought, it does not at all follow that it is this Intelligence that is the Infinite. Nor is there anything whatever in Absolute Intelligence itself to make it Infinite. Absolute Intelligence, a Being the conception of whose existence is a necessary part of human thought, is conceived of only as existing in relation to things that are the possible objects of human thought. Hence the difference, in respect of pervasiveness or absence of limitation, between Absolute Thought or Intelligence and the thought of the individual human mind appears to be simply one of degree. The range of thought of the Power that manifests itself in the universe is not necessarily more than co-extensive with the universe. Nor, in so far as the existence of the Thought or Power becomes known by means of reasoning, can it be conceived of as infinite in any sense, suitable to the immediate argument, in which the collection of objects of possible human thought is not also infinite.

V. We must now notice what Principal Caird has to say in explication of the infinitude which, without at all making good his point, he ascribes to Absolute Thought. The supposed Infinite, in the conception of which the human mind can finally repose, is represented as differing from the finite in the circumstance that the one is not, and the other is, limited by that which is outside itself.

One finite thing exists in some degree outside another, but the Infinite must include in itself all that is finite. "The very existence of an external finite destroys by limiting the notion of infinitude. The true Infinite is that which implies, or in the very idea of its nature contains or embraces the existence of the finite."<sup>1</sup> "The true idea of the Infinite is that which contains in it organic relation to the Finite."<sup>2</sup>

In Absolute Thought, and in Absolute Thought alone, this condition is said to be satisfied. "This idea of the Infinite, if we apprehend its true import, is simply the idea of God as Absolute Spirit. Under no other category than that of Thought or Self-conscious Mind can we conceive of God as an Infinite who manifests Himself in the differences of the finite world, and in these differences returns upon or realizes Himself. It is in Thought or Self-consciousness alone that we have a subject which is limited by nothing outside of itself, for here the only limit is a determination that is capable of being wholly retracted into that which it limits or determines. It is only in the Absolute Thought or Self-consciousness that we reach a sphere where the object is one with the subject, where the knower is also the known. In finite thought the being of the object is still posited as something external to the subject, and the knowledge of the object is something distinct from its knowledge of itself. But infinite Thought or Self-consciousness rises finally above this separation; the last element of foreignness, of external limitation or finiteness vanishes; the object becomes a moment of its own being, the knowing, thinking subject becomes object to itself. . . . It is only when we think of God as Absolute Spirit or Self-consciousness that we attain to an idea of His nature which, while it gives to

<sup>1</sup> p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> p. 242.

the finite the reality of an object ever distinguishable from, never lost in the subject, yet refuses to it any independence or individuality which cannot be brought back to a higher unity. In the light of this idea we see that the world and man have a being and reality of their own, even that highest reality which consists in being that whereby God reveals or manifests Himself; but we see also that their being is no limit to God's infinitude, inasmuch as the highest realization of that being is found in the absolute surrender of any independent life, in its perfect return to God and atonement with Him. There is no higher creation of God than a spirit that is made in His own image, and in that spirit there is nothing higher than the knowledge and love of God. But what, as we have already seen, the knowledge and love of God mean, is the giving up of all thoughts and feelings that belong to me as a mere individual self, and the identification of my thought and being with that which is above me, yet in me—the Universal or Absolute Self which is not mine or yours, but in which all intelligent beings alike find the realization and the perfection of their nature. If therefore we think of God as the Creator of man, as calling into being finite spiritual natures distinct from Himself, we see also that it is the very principle and essence of such natures to renounce their finitude, to quell in themselves the self that divides them from God, and to return not into pantheistic absorption, but into living union with Him from whom they came. There is therefore a sense in which we can say that the world of finite intelligences, though distinct from God, is still, in its ideal nature, one with Him. That which God creates and by which He reveals the hidden treasures of His wisdom and love, is still not foreign to His own infinite life, but one with it. In the knowledge of the minds that know Him, in the

self-surrender of the hearts that love Him, it is no paradox to affirm that He knows and loves Himself."<sup>1</sup>

The association of love with knowledge in the foregoing passage will be commented on in the succeeding section. Let us now consider what is the meaning of the description of the relation between God and man in respect of thought or knowledge.

The first idea is, that human thought and Absolute Thought are organically connected ; human thought resting, as we have seen, upon Absolute Thought, and Absolute Thought, in order to be truly Infinite, necessarily containing in some way in itself, as part of itself, all human thought. The second idea appears to be, that the way in which the thought of the individual human mind lives as a member of the organic whole of Absolute Thought, so that Absolute Thought can find itself in it, is by realizing to itself the existence of Absolute Thought and identifying itself with it by regarding things from a universal or absolute point of view.

The adoption of this procedure Principal Caird seemingly regards as in some way the normal course of human reason. "It is," he says, "the prerogative of man's spiritual nature that he can rise above himself as this particular being, that he can cease to think his own thoughts, or be swayed by his own impulses, and can yield himself up to a thought and will that are other and infinitely larger than his own. As a thinking self-conscious being, indeed, he may be said, by his very nature, to live in the atmosphere of the Universal Life. From the first dawn of consciousness in which sense is already for him transformed into thought, he has entered into this life ; and all spiritual progress is to live more and more in the conscious realization of it. As a thinking being, it is

<sup>1</sup> p. 245.

possible for me to suppress and quell in my consciousness every movement of self-assertion, every notion and opinion that is merely mine, every desire that belongs to me as this particular self, and to become the pure medium of a thought or intelligence that is universal—in one word, to live no more my own life, but let my consciousness become possessed and suffused by the Infinite and Eternal life of spirit. And yet it is just in this renunciation of self that I truly gain myself, or realize the highest possibilities of my nature. When in the language of religion we say, ‘I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me,’ ‘It is God that worketh in me to will and to do of His good pleasure,’ pious feeling is only giving expression in its own way to that which philosophy shows to be in strictest accordance with the principle of man’s spiritual nature. For whilst in one sense we give up self to live the universal and absolute life of reason, yet that to which we thus surrender ourselves is in reality our truer self. The life of absolute truth or reason is not a life that is foreign to us. If it is above us, it is also within us. In yielding to it we are not submitting to an outward and arbitrary law or to an external authority, but to a law that has become our own law, an authority which has become enthroned in the inmost essence of our being. It is the fulfilment and the freedom of every spiritual being to become the organ of Infinite and Absolute reason. When we attain the ideal perfection of our nature, the self that is foreign to it is foreign to us too, it has become lost and absorbed in that deeper, higher self with which our whole life and being is identified. It is our highest glory that every movement of our mind, every pulsation of our spiritual being, should be in harmony with it, and that apart from it we should have no life we can call our own.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 238.



Absolute Thought, then, finds itself in, and so is not limited by, all that body of human thought which sees things from a universal point of view. And to see things, or to learn to see them, from a universal point of view is the proper function of human reason. If this is all that is to be said—and apparently it is—if this is the whole exhibition of the infinitude of Absolute Thought, then it scarcely seems to need pointing out, that Absolute Thought is very far indeed from being Infinite even in the sense of being limited by nothing outside itself. Whatever may be Principal Caird's conception of the relation of Absolute Thought to mundane existences other than human thought, it is certainly the case that there is a vast mass of human thought which does not identify itself, or seek to identify itself, with Absolute and Universal Thought. Absolute Thought does not, in point of fact, find itself everywhere in human thought.

VI. Let us pass on. Let us, in order to continue the discussion, be content to suppose that the human mind does seek after the Infinite, and at length, in the final stage of its development, does find in Absolute Thought the object of its search. We have then to learn the genesis of Christianity from this discovery.

Christian practice is implicitly represented by Principal Caird as consisting in two things. One of these is union with God through submission of the will to Him; the other is union with mankind through merging individuality in the common life of the human race. The former he speaks of as religion, the latter as morality. Omitting all consideration of his view of the content of Christianity, let us see, in this and the section following, how far he is successful in establishing his two principles;—knowledge of God as Absolute and Infinite Thought being assumed.

In the two passages last quoted man is spoken of, not

only as knowing, but also as loving and submitting himself to God. He is supposed to identify himself, not in mind or intellect alone, but in desire and in will, with that Being—spoken of, be it observed, as Absolute *Spirit*—whose necessary existence, as Mind, is apprehended by his mind. Here we have a grave fallacy to deal with. The extent of the nature of the Absolute Being, and the extent of that part of man's nature which is in harmony with it, are both unwarrantably enlarged.

The human mind discovers, we are supposing, in that Absolute Thought, whose existence is a postulate of reason, a Being that satisfies its need of resting in an Infinite. Infinitude, then, may only be defined in terms of the attributes of Thought or Mind or Reason. The mind can have no more extended conception of it, since it is only in the case of Absolute Thought or Mind or Reason that necessary existence is ontologically established. The Infinite, like the Absolute, is thought or mind or reason, and nothing more. We find, however, Principal Caird quietly making 'thought' equivalent to 'spirit,' interpreting 'spirit' as consisting of feeling and mind and will, and then attributing to the Absolute Being infinitude, not of mind alone, but also of feeling and of will. "A spiritual infinitude," he writes, "which merely fills, or spreads itself out, so to speak, through the universe, to the exclusion of all other being but its own, would not be truly infinite; for it would be an Infinite incapable of that which is the highest attribute of spirit—incapable of sympathy, of love, of self-revelation, of a life in the being and life of others. An Infinite, in other words, which is limited only by that which makes love possible is, so to speak, higher, *more* infinite, than an Infinite, which is nothing but the boundlessness or absence of all limits."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 197.

"It is," he says in a passage already quoted, "the prerogative of man's spiritual nature . . . that he can cease to think his own thoughts, or be swayed by his own impulses, and can yield himself up to a thought and will that are other and infinitely larger than his own."<sup>1</sup>

The Absolute Being, then, having infinite mind or reason, is represented as necessarily having also infinite love and infinite will. Somewhat similarly man, identifying himself in mind with Absolute or Infinite Mind, is fallaciously represented as necessarily identifying himself in feeling and in will with Infinite Love and Infinite Will. The proved organic relation—if it may be hypothetically considered proved—between human thought and Absolute Thought is assumed to involve, to carry with it, to necessitate, a similar organic relation between human will and feeling, and a Will and Feeling that are supposed to be attached, co-extensively with it, to Absolute Thought. Religion, or the submission of the will to the Will of Absolute Thought, is apparently put before us as being no less natural and rational a procedure, as having the same justification and the same necessity—whatever this necessity may be supposed to be—as intellectual looking upon things, or learning to look upon them, from a universal point of view. "Religion is the surrender of the finite will to the infinite, the abnegation of all desire, inclination, volition, that pertain to me as this private individual self, the giving up of every aim or activity that points only to my exclusive pleasure or interest, the absolute identification of my will with the will of God. . . . As it is the very life of thought or intelligence to abandon all opinions and notions that pertain to it merely as the thought of this particular mind, and to let itself be dominated by the absolute thought or intelligence so as to

<sup>1</sup> p. 236.

have no other mind than that ; so it is the glory and life of the finite will to abnegate all impulse, desire, volition, that is merely its own, and to become the transparent medium and organ of the infinite and absolute will, one with it, indivisible from it.”<sup>1</sup>

This fallacy, in which religion is made to appear as no less surely established on grounds of pure reason than is the normal action of the human intellect, is more or less due to Principal Caird's conception of individual thought or spirit as an organic whole. On this point he writes as follows : “To say that man is religious because he is rational, is not the same thing as to say that religion has its seat in the intellectual part of man's nature, as distinguished from the emotional or the active. In truth, the question about which so much has been made, as to what special faculty or division of human consciousness it is to which religion distinctively belongs,—whether, in other words, religion is characteristically a thing of knowledge, or of feeling, or of volition and action—is one which rests on a false or defective psychology. The spiritual life and consciousness of man cannot be broken up, as this inquiry implies, into independent divisions or departments existing side by side, or into separate powers and faculties having a common substratum in something which is called ‘the mind’ ; nor is it possible to assert with respect to any of the concrete manifestations of man's spiritual nature, that it is confined to any one form of activity to the exclusion of other and cognate forms. There is no feeling or volition which does not contain in it implicitly an element of knowledge, nor any kind of knowledge which does not presuppose feeling, or in which the mind is in an attitude simply passive and receptive, without any element of activity. A spiritual unity cannot be conceived of as a

<sup>1</sup> p. 284.

repository, like a case of instruments or a box of tools, in which so many things are placed side by side, but rather as a unity of which the various elements necessarily involve each other or are the correlative expressions of a common principle. And if we ask what is that central principle which is present in all the many-sided aspects of our spiritual life—in our sensations, feelings, desires, imaginations, conceptions, notions, etc.—and of which these are but the various or successive specifications, more or less concrete, the answer can only be, that that principle is *Thought*. Thought, intelligence, self-consciousness, is not one among many co-ordinate faculties, having its own peculiar functions, its own particular times and ways of action, but it is that which runs through, characterizes, gives organic relation to, all our spiritual activities.”<sup>1</sup>

Let it be fully granted that will and feeling are members, with mind, of an organic whole. Still, to make will and feeling follow exactly the lead of mind, simply because they are organically related, seems clearly to be fallacious reasoning. It would, apparently, be equally correct, or almost equally correct, to argue thus :—Man’s body is an organism consisting of members in all of which there is present, when they perform their functions, some manifestation of motion. Motion is not restricted to the activity of the limbs, but is present in all the scheming of the brain, and throughout the stomach’s digestion of its food. Therefore limbs and brain and stomach must be considered as participating always in the pursuit of a common complex end, an end which satisfies with the same completeness the need for motion that is in them all. Whenever the limbs are active, brain and stomach sympathetically share in the whole of the activity; whatever occupation gives fitting exercise to the limbs, this

<sup>1</sup> p. 153.

affords also to the brain just the mental object it requires, and procures at the same time the exact amount of food which is needed for the operations of the stomach.

VII. We may now, in conclusion, consider briefly what Principal Caird has to say on the subject of morality. He depicts a strife in man's consciousness—into the particulars of which we need not enter—between the individual and the universal elements of his nature. Of this strife religion is the full conciliation, by means of the agent uniting himself to and merging his individuality in the Infinite, or the completely universal Being. Morality, in which he does no more than merge his individuality in the universal life of man, is a similar conciliation, but a conciliation which is partial only. On this point—that morality does imperfectly that which religion does perfectly—let us for a moment dwell, before we go on to discuss the meaning and basis of morality.

"Morality," says Principal Caird, "is, and from its nature can be, only the partial solution of that contradiction; and its partial or incomplete character may be said, in general, to arise from this, that whilst the end aimed at is the realization of an infinite ideal, the highest result of morality is only a never-ending approximation to that ideal. It gives us, instead of the infinite, only the endless negation of the finite."<sup>1</sup> Later on he writes—"It may be said to be the essential characteristic of religion as contrasted with morality, that it changes aspiration into fruition, anticipation into realization; that instead of leaving man in the interminable pursuit of a vanishing ideal, it makes him the actual partaker of a divine or infinite life. Whether we view religion from the human side or the divine—as the surrender of the soul to God, or as the life of God in the soul; as the elevation of the

<sup>1</sup> p. 277.

finite to the infinite, or as the realization of the infinite in the finite—in either aspect, it is of its very essence that the infinite has ceased to be merely a far-off vision of spiritual attainment, an ideal of indefinite future perfection, and has become a present reality. God does not hover before the religious mind as a transcendental object which it may conceive or contemplate, but which, wind itself ever so high, it must feel to be for ever inaccessible. The very first pulsation of the spiritual life, when we rightly apprehend its significance, is the indication that the division between the spirit and its object has vanished, that the ideal has become real, that the finite has reached its goal and become suffused with the presence and life of the Infinite.”<sup>1</sup>

If the relation between morality and religion is indeed such as is here described, if morality is a hopeless progress towards, while religion is an immediate entering into, the infinite or universal life, what need is there of morality for those who are conversant with religion? Why should men embark upon a toilsome and never-ending struggle, in order to obtain that which they know themselves to be, even now, entitled to claim as and to make their own?

But, dropping this conception of morality as an imperfect substitute for religion, let us regard morality as what for practical purposes Professor Caird supposes it to be, namely, the living the universal life of humanity. “Morality,” he says, “or the moral life may be described as the renunciation of the private or exclusive self and the identification of our life with an ever-widening sphere of spiritual life beyond us. That I am more than this self-contained individuality, capable of a larger and fuller life, I realize, in the first place, when my private, personal

<sup>1</sup> p. 281.

self expands into a self that is common to all the members of the corporate unity of the family. Here the latent capabilities of love and sympathy are liberated, and the pulse of my spiritual life begins to beat with the movements of an organic life into which many individual lives now enter. We speak of certain duties which the individual has to perform as parent, child, brother, sister; but these duties are based on the fact that it is in and through the relations so designated that the true nature of the individual expresses or realizes itself. Then only do I truly perform my duties when they are no longer imposed on my will, but a law with which I feel and know myself to be identified. And the same thing is true of the more comprehensive social relations—the relations of the individual to the community, the state, the common brotherhood of humanity. . . . The capacity of a universal life finds its highest realization when the individual rises above even the organic life of the community or state, to identify himself with the moral life of the race. The higher and more developed the organism, so much the richer and fuller is the life which flows into each individual member of it. If there is an escape from selfish isolation when the individual identifies himself with the larger unity of the family, or again, if his spiritual life is still more expanded and enriched when his happiness is implicated with the welfare and progress of the wider organism of the state,—then most of all will the individual nature become enlarged when the love of kindred and of country expands into an affection yet more comprehensive,—the love of humanity, and the life and happiness of the individual becomes identified with the spiritual life and perfection of the race.”<sup>1</sup>

The supposed essential reasonableness of willing to live

<sup>1</sup> p. 266.



among men the universal life of humanity is indicated in the following passage:—"As on the theoretical side, thought, whatever it thinks, can never go beyond itself, and ever as it advances in knowledge is only reclaiming the inheritance of which from the beginning it is virtually the heir: so, on the practical side, whatever I will and do for the good of others, I am still and ever willing and doing that which reveals and realizes my own true nature. I am not one individual in a world of individuals, having a will of my own which is not theirs, as they have wills which are not mine, so that where my will ends their will begins; but on the contrary, it is in ceasing to have a will of my own—to will only what pertains to my own private, exclusive self, in entering into the life, identifying my will with the will and welfare of others, that I realize my own spiritual nature and become actually what, as possessed of a moral will, I am potentially. All truth is knowable as *my* knowledge, all good willable as *my* will; and in the impossibility of being determined by anything foreign to my own thought and will, of being negated by any thing or being in which I am not at the same time affirmed, lies the infinitude of man's spiritual nature."<sup>1</sup>

Let us now suppose that, as practical persons, we come to Principal Caird for rational guidance as to the moral ordering of our lives. He begins his instruction by pointing out to us, that "on the theoretical side thought can never go beyond itself, but ever as it advances in knowledge is only reclaiming the inheritance of which from the beginning it is virtually the heir." To this—understanding it to mean, that the objects of thought, which the thinking mind seeks for and finds outside itself, are the necessary material of its own life and growth—we readily assent. He then continues—Similarly "on the

<sup>1</sup> p. 279.

practical side whatever I will and do for the good of others, I am still and ever willing and doing that which reveals and realizes my own true nature." This statement, ostensibly based upon that to which we have signified assent, and having in it a certain ring of truth, is nevertheless not immediately clear to us, and we take pains to consider what it really means.

Evidently the substance of the argument is, that it is natural and reasonable for the will to act on the same principle—the principle of finding its objects outside itself—that governs the operations of the thinking mind. But let us closely examine this as a piece of reasoning. As the mind can enlarge its knowledge only by thinking of things that are other than itself, so the will can—what? Let us say, So the will can realize its freedom only by determining upon ends which are not concerned with its own being. This, whether the argument be regarded as analogical, or as depending on the organic relation existing between mind and will, seems to be the only strict and proper conclusion to be drawn.

Since, however, this conclusion appears to be of a barren and futile nature, let us provisionally accept a looser dialectic. Let us agree to substitute, for the being or constitution of the will itself, the general well-being of the individual human organism of which it forms a part. We then have for our moral guidance this maxim—that we must not make our own well-being the end of conduct, but must fix our resolves upon objects which we can contemplate as ends external to ourselves, not merely as means to our private happiness. This, however true and useful a maxim, carries us but a very little way towards a reasonable choice of ends and aims. It certainly does not point to the principle of preferring universal human well-being to all other ends.

But, though we fail to obtain from our instructor an explanation of the reasonable basis of the principle which he advocates, let us suppose that the sound of it is so attractive to the ear, that we do not hesitate to admit the desirability of adopting it. We then proceed to inquire, What, in practice, is this making universal human well-being the grand end of conduct? It is, we are aware, "the identifying my will with the will and welfare of others"; and we have of course some general knowledge of what this must mean. But, as philosophers and at the same time practical men, we should much like to learn more definitely by what principle conduct should be governed. Is it the will, or is it the welfare of others, in accordance with which our determinations should be made? Shall we—let us say—rigidly conform our actions to that public opinion which may be regarded as the interpreter of the universal will? Or shall we make it our business to do that which we suppose to be most conducive to the welfare of the race? And, whichever of these two distinct principles we adopt, what is to govern the determinations of our will in those innumerable details of daily life for the regulation of which it practically makes no provision? To these cardinal inquiries Principal Caird's treatise supplies no answer.

Universal conduct, or conduct immediately determined in accordance, now with the will, now with the welfare, of any community of which we form a part, most certainly has its place in a true system of morality. And doubtless Principal Caird is, in a manner, at one with Christian teaching in pleading for the entire subordination of individual aims and interests to the aims and interests of an organic whole. But to make corporate well-being the sole guiding principle of action must—whatever view we take as to the method of directly pursuing it as an end—be

pronounced a delusion. Christianity, which claims the regulation of a man's whole life, is not so impracticable a system of morality as to leave its adherents with no other guidance than this fundamental principle. Let it be admitted that the common good is the true ultimate end of moral action, yet, as it is utterly impossible, in the present constitution of society, for human reason to do more than regulate some portion of conduct by means of conscious observance of this end, there is need of other principles, in obedience to which for their own sake great part of morality must practically consist. There is need of them, that is, for persons who place reliance upon their own reason for guidance in the hourly application of the principles they profess. For the mature Christian, and for him alone, the one principle—a principle, it must be insisted, not evolved by reason, but revealed by Christ, and having its ground and sanction in new relations created by God between humanity and Himself—may perhaps suffice. It may suffice for him, because it is in his power to have it on all occasions practically interpreted for him by God. It is in his power, by means of prayer to God, to learn from the guiding Voice of Conscience what is the action which He desires him to take. And the action which God desires him to take is, there can be but little doubt, identical with that which, in the given circumstances, is best for the well-being of the whole Church of Christ.

THE END.



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